

"From now on, I am an ordinary villager in Wenlou ..."

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In the open valley between two passes lies a unique cultural sight, the town of Nianbadu.

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"Beijing's winter is cold, but its nothing like living in the dark for two months at 20 degrees below zero, like in Stockholm."

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# BEIJING TODAY

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## TV Maker Faces \$460 Million Deficit

By Sun Yongjian

China's largest TV manufacturer, the Sichuan-based Changhong Electric Company, announced a deficit of nearly half a billion US dollars Tuesday.

Following the announcement, Changhong's share price fell 0.5 yuan on the Shanghai stock exchange, wiping 475 million yuan off the company's market value, according to a report in *Beijing Morning Post* yesterday.

Listed in 1994, the brand value of Changhong products reached 33.1 billion yuan in 2004 and the company has won fame as the most valuable domestic brand, according to its own website.

"The deficit is due to unfavorable factors caused by a US-based importer called Apex Digital, a major importer and sales agent of Changhong in the United States," the announcement said.

"Payments on a \$467.5 million debt Apex owes Changhong are in arrears due to a combination of factors, including the US government's anti-dumping policy against China-made TV sets, failed business operation, and patent application expenses which have caused great losses for Apex. Changhong is continuing to demand the payment through legal means," the statement continued.

The statement did not refer to the alleged detention of Apex board chairman Ji Longfen in Sichuan.

### Rumors of deficit confirmed

On March 5, 2003, *Securities Daily* reported that Changhong had been defrauded in the US by Apex.

"Sources from some sales agents of Changhong told *Securities Daily* that several hundred million yuan were at risk because Changhong's import and sales agent company in the US, Apex, had refused to pay sales income to Changhong on time," the report said.

But a senior administrator of Changhong's department of overseas sales named Shi Zhengping told domestic media including China News Agency on March 6 that year that the rumor was unfounded.

The announcement by Changhong suggests the *Securities Daily* report was correct.

### Putting on a brave face

"Of the amount in arrears, \$150 million is expected to be withdrawn, according to the assessment of the assets condition of Apex," Changhong's announcement said. It went on, "Changhong has made provisions to cover the possible losses of \$310 million."

All business relations between the two companies were cut in April this year, when Changhong found that \$310 billion Apex owed Changhong was at risk of being withdrawn.

"Despite the large deficit, the asset liability rate of Changhong still remains under 50 percent after necessary accounting measures are taken to deal with the deficit. With net assets of 14 billion yuan, Changhong still rates as a domestic enterprise with the

best performing assets," Changhong spokesman Liu Haizhong said in a statement released to the media on Monday.

"The banks' confidence in Changhong has improved in 2004, despite the large deficit," the statement stressed.

"The big four state-owned commercial banks have finished the credit extension to Changhong in 2005, with an amount of 8.5 billion yuan implemented. Some other shareholding commercial banks such as Minsheng Bank, Merchant Bank and Everbright Bank are ready to provide a 4 billion yuan credit extension to Changhong," the statement said.

Liu Haizhong told *Beijing Today* Monday that the enterprise remains in a sound condition both in terms of financial indicators and in business operations. He expected that all business operation indicators would increase in 2005.

### Apex head detained?

"David Ji (Ji Longfen), the board chairman of Apex Digital has been detained by Sichuan police since October, 2004 on charges of fraud," *21st Century Business Herald* reported. But Sichuan police would not confirm the report to *Beijing Today* when contacted Tuesday.

A spokeswoman for Apex Digital, Marietta Schoenherz, initially said on Monday that she had not heard any news of Ji's supposed detention, according to a report in Tuesday's *New York Times*.

Later she issued a statement from the company's general counsel, who was not identified, which said that a disagreement between Changhong and Apex was being addressed. The statement also said that the company anticipated Ji's "return to the US shortly."

David Ji was honored by *Time* magazine in December 2002 as one of the most globally effective entrepreneurs, according to a report in *Beijing Youth Daily* on Monday.

Ji and his partner Xu Anke, jointly set up Apex brand DVD at the end of 1999 and had won 15 percent of the market share by the end of 2000. "The sales of 87 percent of TVs imported from China in the US market rely on Apex," Ji has been quoted as saying.

The sales agent relationship between Changhong and Apex started from 2001, when Ni Runfeng, the former board chairman of Changhong visited the US with an eye to capturing a slice of the local TV market. From July 2001, Changhong TVs were exported to the US where they were sold by Apex. Sales of Changhong TVs in 2002 and 2003 were worth \$1.3 billion, according to a report in the Shanghai based *Daily Economic News* on Monday.

However Ji and Apex had long been notorious for a high level of debt to several domestic appliance makers, the report said.

### National bond investment

"By December 25, around 182.8 million yuan of Changhong's, which had been entrusted to Southern Securities to be invested into national bonds were at risk because the securities firm has been involved in a depressed liability crisis," the Changhong announcement said.



Workers at Changhong's TV factory in Mianyang, Sichuan.

Photo provided by Changhong

## An Invisible Killer Called Depression

By Chu Meng

Zhang Fan has finally overcome a 16-month nightmare that began when her only daughter committed suicide. She has placed herself under the spotlight of the media to tell her story in the hope that by doing so, she might help some of the tens of thousands of young people who are suffering in the grip of a disease called depression.

"For university students under unendurable pressure, and for those parents who are concerned about the health of their

children, I have to stand up and say that depression is not such a horrible thing as many people think. Instead, through right treatment both mental and medical, it is completely curable," 53-year-old Zhang told *Beijing Today* on Tuesday.

Zhang's daughter, Yang Yuqing, was 24 years old and in the third year of a master's program at Fudan University's School of Journalism when she committed suicide in September last year.

Consistently at the top of

her class at school, she had always had her heart set on gaining admittance to one of the first-class universities. However in 1997, just one month before the national exam for university admittance, she lost her exemption status. This blow, according to her mother, marked the beginning of her descent into depression.

"However, my daughter eventually still managed to enter Fudan University through her own efforts. Her grades topped all students from Qingdao that year. But I didn't know then that the trauma was impressed in her heart forever. From then on, my daughter began her six years fight with depression. The situation didn't even get better when she was offered a place in the post-graduate school of journalism," Zhang said.

After Yang Yuqing's suicide, the grieving couple suddenly discovered that as well as the loss of their only daughter, they had to deal with other people's misunderstandings of the disease of depression, gossip about the girl killing herself because of an unhappy love affair, and even blame for failing to prevent such a tragedy.

"The enormous pressure from the public deeply hurt my husband and I. Depression is not something that should make people react in such a way. It is just like any other psychological disease, though it is relatively unfamiliar to Chinese, especially older people," Zhang said.

However, the nightmare was just beginning for Zhang Fan and her husband. As *Beijing Today* reported on November 5,

events took a bizarre turn when the grieving couple were locked up for almost two months in a psychiatric ward of the Shanghai Psychiatric Health Center, where their daughter had received psychiatric treatment for six years.

Zhang said that following her and her husband's release from the hospital, she resolved to come to terms with her daughter's suicide, and to learn how depression could have brought her to death. "Moreover, I hope can find a way of helping people who are mired in the same swamp," she said, "Now it has been 16 months since she died. In that time, I have become more and more aware of what this disease can do. I want to work as a psychiatric consultant at suicide prevention centers with the aim of helping depressed students and their parents."

On September 10, World Suicide Prevention Day, Zhang made a speech at a conference organized by the World Health Organization (WHO)'s Association of Suicide Prevention. She told the conference that the number of university students in the grip of depression and who require professional help is not small. As a mother, she strongly advocated that those students actively face the disease and seek help from psychiatric professionals, parents and friends. For their part, the parents should reduce the pressure of them and ensure their children receive proper treatment as early as possible.

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Zhang Fan with a photo of her daughter, Yang Yuqing.

Photo by Jiang Baohu



# Anti-secession Law to Reflect Common Will

Chinese top legislator Wu Bangguo Wednesday promised that the national legislature will do its best to fully reflect the common will of all Chinese people in making the anti-secession law.

The lawmakers will follow the constitution and the central authorities' policies on Taiwan, Wu stressed at the closing meeting of the 13th session of the 10th National People's Congress (NPC) Standing Committee.

It was also decided at the meeting that the draft anti-secession law be submitted for deliberation at the third full session of the 10th NPC slated for March next year.

The NPC is the highest legislature in China, and Wu is the chairman of the NPC Standing Committee.

Wu said that it is one of three major historic tasks of the Chinese government and the Communist Party of China to achieve the reunification of the motherland. "We have made unremitting efforts for developing relations across the Taiwan Straits and promoting the peaceful reunification of the motherland with our deepest sincerity for a long time," he said.

However, in recent years, the Taiwan authorities have accelerated the secessionist activities for "Taiwan Independence,"

especially through the so-called "constitutional reform." These secessionist activities have become the largest obstacle to the development of cross-Straits relations and peaceful reunification, and constituted the gravest threat to peace and stability across the Taiwan Straits, he said.

Wu said that it is "absolutely necessary" to formulate the anti-secession law to fight and curb the secessionists in Taiwan, promote the peaceful reunification of the motherland, maintain peace and stability across the Straits, safeguard China's sovereignty and territorial integrity, and maintain the fundamental interests of the Chinese nation.

Over the last few years, people from all walks of life on the Chinese mainland and many overseas Chinese have repeatedly expressed an increasingly strong demand to fight the Taiwan secessionist forces and realize the peaceful reunification of China by legal means. Quite a few Chinese lawmakers and senior advisors have also brought bills, proposals and motions before the NPC, stating that formulating such a law conforms to the will of the people.

"Now the conditions for making the law are ripe," said Wu.

(Xinhua)

## NPC Deliberates on Draft Laws

By Nie Zhiyang

A series of draft laws were submitted for deliberation Saturday to the 13th session of the Standing Committee of the 10th National People's Congress, which ran from December 25 to 29.

The laws include an anti-secession law, as well as bills dealing with notaries, civil servants and renewable sources.

The bill on notaries sets the principles of establishing a notary institution according to related laws. Definite provisions are also prescribed on the qualification of would-be notaries, as well as activities banned for notary organizations and their employees, in order to prevent notary abuses and protect the rights of clients.

However, there was no debate on the controversial issue of whether a notary organization is a governmental or non-governmental law agency.

The new draft civil servant law enlarges the extension of the rank and file of the civil employees, including cadres from both the Communist Party and the government, and makes clearer arrangements on civil service recruitment and assessments.

New forms of enlistment, such as public appointment, competition for position and appointment mechanisms of certain occupations, are also adopted.

In addition, more rungs will be created in the career ladder of civil servants to provide more opportunities for promotion to stimulate the work of the office-bearers and therefore streamline the efficiency of the government's work.

The standing committee also deliberated a bill on regenerative energy resources to encourage and regulate the use of solar and wind energy to ease the current energy shortage.

## RMB Cards To Be Available for Use Abroad

By Sun Yongjian

China's central bank has approved RMB cards issued by domestic banks to be available for daily consumption in three Asian countries from January 10, 2005, according to a statement released on the website of the People's Bank of China.

Bank cards issued by domestic banks carrying the logo "China Unionpay" will be accepted by automatic teller machines and point-of-sale machines that display the logo in South Korea, Thailand and Singapore.

China Unionpay is the only national payment network for Chinese banks, according to a report in *China Daily* Wednesday.

Bank card holders will enjoy more convenient services in the three countries when purchasing goods, traveling and paying for accommodation, the statement said.

## State Moves to Cool Power Plant Boom

By Pan Hao

According to last Friday's *China Business*, the State Council has released a notice ordering local governments to halt the construction of inappropriate power plants.

The domestic power plant industry currently has an annual capacity of 450 million megawatts, and there are currently power plants with a total capacity of 280 million megawatts under construction. Almost half of these have not been officially approval by the central government. The value of the illegal constructions totals 600 billion yuan. Furthermore, these new power plants will result in a total capacity far beyond the planned level, and place an excessive burden on the natural environment and resources.

## Rail Network to be Expanded

By Pan Hao

The Ministry of Railways announced its 15th Five-year Plan at the national railway conference last Wednesday. According to the plan, by the end of 2005, China will have 75 thousand kilometers of railway.

Minister of railways Fu Zhihuan said that railway construction in the western region will be speeded up. The main railway network will be enhanced and 2,000 kilometers of new track will be laid in the central and western regions, as well as 25,000 kilometers of branch lines.

Maximum speeds will be increased along 14,000 miles railway. Furthermore, railway service staff will be reduced from 1.5 million to 1.4 million. The estimated income for 2005 is 125.5 billion yuan.

## Catering Industry Hits Record High

By Qiu Jiaoning

The annual sales volume of China's catering industry has reached 740 billion yuan, with an annual growth of over 130 billion yuan, Xinhua reported Sunday.

According to the National Bureau of Statistics, turnover for the first 11 months of this year hit 668 billion yuan, a year-on-year rise of 21.9 percent.

An analyst from China Cooking Association said Sunday that China's catering sales accounted for nearly 13.8 percent of the country's total retail sales in the first 11 months of this year, driving total retail sales to a 2.81 percentage point growth.

The Christmas and New Year's Eve surge in business is expected to help the catering industry achieve an 80 billion yuan turnover in December 2004.

## Spring Festival Charity Dinner Announced

By Annie Wei

China Assist Poverty Organization announced Tuesday it would hold a Spring Festival charity dinner next year.

Scheduled for February 1, all money collected from the event will be donated to help young people living in poverty to receive training and find employment, according to the organization.

Liu Wenkui, vice-secretary of the organization told the press that ticket prices ranged in seven levels from 1,800 to 38,000 yuan. Those purchasing the top level tickets would not only be honored as a participant in assisting poverty, but would also meet with government leaders.

There is a limit of 3,500 to 4,000 tickets, and only 60 people can be seated at the main table. People who have records of donating over 1 million yuan will have first priority, some tickets will be sold directly by the organization, and the remainder can be subscribed by calling 8422 6262.

People interested in participating can find more information at [www.chinafc.org](http://www.chinafc.org).

## Beijing Seeks Olympic Slogans

By Annie Wei

BOCOG, the organizing committee for the 2008 Olympics, announced Monday that it would accept suggestions from the public for Chinese and English slogans for the 2008 Olympic Games from January 1 to 31 next year.

BOCOG will also invite experts with different backgrounds, such as sociologists and linguists, to come up with new slogans.

The slogans, both in English and

Chinese should embody the concepts of environmentally friendly, hi-technology and humanity, and also represent the true value of the Olympic Games. Slogans used in previous games include "Friends Forever" for Barcelona in 1992, and "Welcome Home" for the 2004 Athens Olympics.

Those interested can visit [www.Beijing2008.com](http://www.Beijing2008.com) for more information, or send an email to [wenhua@beijingolympic.org.cn](mailto:wenhua@beijingolympic.org.cn).

## New Reforms Promoted for SOEs

By Sun Yongjian

The central government is promoting two major reforms in state owned enterprises (SOEs), Xinhua reported Monday.

Huang Shuhe, deputy director of the State-owned Assets Administrative Commission of the State Council, said in Chengdu on Monday that those SOEs under the control of the central government would be given greater autonomy in the public recruitment of senior personnel employment, as well as considering employing general managers when objective conditions allow.

The seven senior administrative executives recruited in 2003 have achieved outstanding performance results, and some of them have been chosen as candidates for those enterprises top leadership, Huang said.

Huang also said that the central government would promote equity swaps between central government-owned enterprises and local government-owned enterprises, meaning that the two types of SOEs could hold shares in one another, in order to speed up shareholding reform in both.

## Next Generation Internet Enters Operation

By Nie Zhiyang

Eight government departments announced the launch of the backbone network of the China Education and Research Network (CERNET2) Saturday at a meeting marking the tenth anniversary of CERNET in Beijing.

The state funded CERNET was launched in 1994 by the Ministry of Education, and has contributed greatly to the development of the Internet in China.

CERNET2, which is regarded as the globe's biggest next-generation internet network based

on Internet Protocol version 6, reached a top speed of 2.5 to 10 gigabits per second in the backbone network and connects 25 universities in 20 cities at a speed of 1 to 10 gigabits per second. It also promises a significantly larger number of addresses, according to experts at the meeting.

Based on state-of-the-art technology and boasting superior capacity and capability, CERNET2 highlights China's rapid development in the field from a follower to a leader.



The first batch of Chinese relief goods of humanitarian aid to the tsunami-hit counties of Indonesia, Sri Lanka, Maldives and Thailand is loaded aboard a cargo plane at Beijing Capital Airport Wednesday. The government announced Wednesday that it would increase the amount of aid to the stricken countries.

Xinhua Photo

## What Is Depression?

The term "depression" can be confusing since it is often used to describe normal emotional reactions. People suffering from depression have pervasive feelings of sadness. In addition, depressed people may feel helpless, hopeless and irritable.

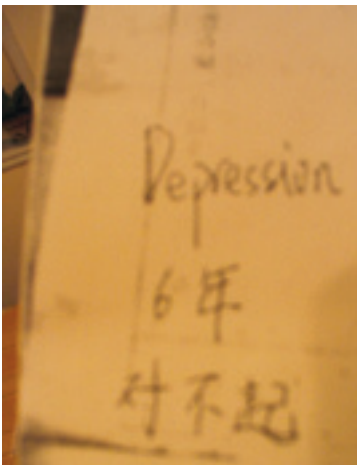
Whatever its cause, depression is not just a state of mind. It is related to physical changes in the brain, and connected to an imbalance of a type of chemical that carries signals in the brain and nerves.

(Continued from page 1)

Nie Zhenwei, a psychiatrist at Beijing Normal University's Psychiatric Consultation Center, told *Beijing Today* Wednesday, "The number of depression sufferers in China exceeds 26 million, and discrimination and neglect are the two major obstacles to curing them. A recent seminar titled Attention to the Socio-Economic Burden of Depression conservatively estimated that annual losses caused by the disease amounted to over 64 billion yuan."

Nie said that while enjoying new life in a new century, people are suffering from mental miseries brought about by increasing competition and various other kinds of pressures. WHO estimated that 3 percent of adults in the world suffer from depression and in some countries, the proportion may be higher. In China, the lowest general estimate is 2 percent of the population, or some 26 million people.

"I have found that some people feel a sense of shame about being diagnosed as suffer-



Shortly before she died, Yang Yuying wrote on a scrap of paper, "Depression, 6 years, sorry."

Photo by Jiang Baohu

ing from depression, and they often encounter hostility from society. Consequently, only about 5 percent of people suffering from depression receive proper treatment. However, the toughest problem is the very low rate of identification of such patients in medical institutions," she said.

According to Nie, there is a popular misconception that

mental illness can only be cured through psychological treatment, and that any form of medication is therefore inappropriate. However effective measures involve a combination of medical treatment and psychiatric support.

The disease has aroused the attention of China's health departments, which are moving to increase the identification rate of depression, and raise the standard of medical treatment and recovery of depression patients through improving mental health services and security measures. In 2002, the Ministry of Health's Disease Control Department formulated the Plan for China's Mental Health Work (2002-2010).

A report released in September by the Social and Economic Burden of Depression (SEBOD), an international advocacy group said that depression costs China at least 30 billion yuan (US \$3.6 billion) in lost productivity a year, in a country where the problem is often ignored and treatment is under-funded. One problem

is that people are not willing to recognize that they suffer from a depressive disorder, either because of shame or reluctance to admitting to having a health problem. Secondly, mental disorders are not given the same priority as physical disorders by the health care system.

Little more than a decade ago, few families in China had even heard of such illnesses as schizophrenia, depression and anxiety disorder. But today, China's demand for psychiatric services is soaring. Tian Yuying, a psychiatrist at Huilongguan Hospital, China's largest psychiatric facility in the north of Beijing, told *Beijing Today* yesterday, "Our outpatient count has doubled in the past two years. The Chinese Society of Psychiatry has set up a mental-health website that gets 20,000 hits daily. And suicide – the leading cause of death for Chinese between the ages of 15 and 34 – has reached an alarming pace, double the US rate per capita. There are 2 million people try to kill themselves annually."



# CCTV Names Top Ten Economic Personalities of 2004

By Qiu Jiaoning

The 10 most influential people in China's economic realm were named at CCTV's awards ceremony for the 2004 China Economic Annual Figures at the Beijing Hotel Tuesday evening.

Li Jinhua, who is known as the "iron-handed auditor-general" of the National Audit Office, won the top prize in the awards. A report led by Li brought to light 1.4 billion yuan of the government's 2003 budget that was misused or wrongfully appropriated by 41 of 55 government offices, revelations that have sparked a nationwide storm of close audits for further misappropriations.

The nine other figures recognized by CCTV were: Ma Yun, chairman of the Alibaba auction Web site; Yang Yuanqing, CEO of Lenovo Group; Mai Boliang, president of China International Marine Containers (Group) Co.; Hu Maoyuan, president of Shanghai Automotive Industry Corp.; Li Dongsheng, president of TCL Group; Hou Weigui, chairman of ZTE Corp; Wang Xianzhang, general manager of China Life Insurance (Group) Co.; Guo Guangchang, chairman of Fosun High Technology Group; and Zhou Xiaochuan, governor of the People's Bank of China.



Li Jinhua (left), auditor-general of the National Audit Office and Tuesday night's top honoree, grabs his award with his "iron hands" from popular CCTV hostess Wang Xiaoya.

## Energy SOEs Merge in Major Deal

By Annie Wei

Beijing International Power Development and Investment Corp. and Beijing Comprehensive Investment Co., both large state-owned enterprises, merged into a new company Sunday.

The new firm, Beijing Energy Investment Holding Co., has 8.8 billion yuan in registered capital, it was announced at the press conference for the company's debut.

The establishment of the new investment company was a big move in the restructuring of China's state-owned enterprises and the firm's total assets would

reach 26 billion yuan before 2005, Bai Jinrong, deputy director of the Beijing State-owned Assets Supervision and Administration Commission said.

The new investment company announced it would serve as an investment and financing platform for construction projects related to power, high-tech, real estate and securities in Beijing. It has 20 power-related investment projects underway and two of its subsidiaries provide 70 percent of the city's power and 79 percent of its heating.

The company should play a

major role in the improvement of Beijing's energy provision system, a goal set in the energy development plan of the Beijing Municipal Development and Reform Commission.

Li Fengling, chairman of Beijing Energy Investment, was quoted in the *China Business* newspaper on Monday as saying Beijing was an energy-reliant city consuming huge amounts of power and that the new company would develop clean energy and set up new power plants in energy resource-rich areas like Inner Mongolia and Shaanxi.

## Four State Coal Companies Meld in Northeast

By Annie Wei

Heilongjiang Coal Group Co. was established last Sunday and plans to issue shares to overseas investors in Hong Kong next year, according to an article in *China Business News* on Monday.

The new company was formed through the merger of four state-owned coal companies in Heilongjiang Province and included 16 mines, six coal washing factories, four power plants and another 55 units in-

cluding sales and construction outfits, with total assets of 13 billion yuan, the article said.

The four companies would keep their secondary businesses for the time being, but the restructuring would be complete before October 2005, Yu Mengfei, head of the statute section of the Heilongjiang State-owned Assets Supervision and Administration told the newspaper.

He was quoted as saying the administration would help introduce foreign investors into

the restructuring effort.

Japan's Itochu Corp. said on December 19 that it had signed an investment agreement with the new company.

The Japanese firm said it would get shares when Heilongjiang Coal listed for investing \$6 million in the new company and be the Chinese side's distributor in Japan.

Su Gang of the planning and development section of the Heilongjiang State-owned Assets Supervision and Administration Commission said the size of Itochu's stake was under negotiation, adding the two sides had agreed on other projects including new mine development.

to do because many people refused to answer our questions. But our base was very big, so we could still attain useful data after dropping all the invalid stuff," he said.

The impact of underground credit on the economy was different in different regions, Li said. It could actually have a more positive than negative effect in rural areas, while the opposite was true in urban areas.

The high interest rates on underground loans tended to result in low payment rates, sparking violence and other illegal actions, Li said, suggesting legal financial institutions expand their credit businesses to meet national demand.

## West-to-East Pipeline Fully Pumping

By Annie Wei

The west-to-east gas pipeline project, the largest pipeline in China, began full commercial operation on Thursday, the State Development Planning Commission announced.

The project, begun in July 2002, is designed to carry natural gas from the Tarim Basin in the northwest of the Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region and the Changqing gas field in Shaanxi Province to eastern provinces.

The pipeline runs 4,000 kilometers through nine provinces to Shanghai and is expected to carry 12 billion cubic meters of gas a year by 2007 and later

expand to 17 billion cubic meters a year.

The Tarim Basin, the main gas source for the project, has estimated reserves of 545.7 billion cubic meters of natural gas and the Changqing gas field is able to produce 4.8 billion cubic meters of gas annually with an estimated 1.1 trillion cubic meters of reserves, 751 billion cubic meters of which is available for exploitation.

The State Development Planning Commission said that the project had already set agreements with 43 gas supply companies, power plants and other major users, 28 of whom had signed contracts.

## ADB Offers Big Loan for Power Project

By Qiu Jiaoning

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) has approved a \$117.4 million loan to a power plant project in China's Shanxi Province, the *China Oriental Post* reported last Friday.

The coal mine methane development project will help boost coalmine and coalbed methane production to fuel a 120-megawatt power plant that will be built under the demonstration project. The power generated will be used at the Sihe mine in Shanxi and the project will also capture methane from other mines for distribution to residential, commercial, and industrial consumers in the Jincheng area of the province.

Under the project, by 2008, about 90,000 households and various industries and commercial establishments will be provided at least 166 million cubic meters of coalmine methane per year, and around 410,000 people in

Jincheng will directly benefit from the cleaner energy, which should reduce indoor and outdoor pollution.

ADB's loan, which accounts for 49.5 percent of the project's costs, comes from the bank's ordinary capital resources and has a 24-year term, including a grace period of four years. Interest would be determined in accordance with ADB's standard practices, the company said in a statement on its website.

The total cost of the project was estimated at \$237 million, of which additional loans of \$20 million would come from the Japan Bank for International Cooperation and \$37.86 million from China Construction Bank, the statement said. The Jincheng municipal government and two of the mining groups involved would provide equity capital totaling \$61.24 million, and the US Trade and Development Agency has also provided a \$500,000 grant.

## COFCO Set to Sell Up-market Oil

By Deng Minjie

China National Cereals, Oils and Foodstuffs Corp (COFCO) announced it had reached an agreement with US-based Archer Daniels Midland to invest around 40 million yuan in the research and development of a premium vegetable cooking oils, the *Beijing News* reported last Friday.

The move marks COFCO's entry into China's expanding high-end cooking oil market.

"Though this kind of oil accounts for only 0.1 percent of COFCO's oil output, we view it as a product with great potential and plant to invest in opening the market for it this year. We hope to distribute 20 percent of our Vitoil brand oils to Japan, South Korea and other Asian countries in the near future," said Tao Changding, general manager of the Vitoil research and development department of COFCO's subsidiary Eastocean Oils & Grains Industries (Zhangjiagang) Co.

Domestic media have reported that Malaysia-based Kerry Group, one of COFCO's main competitors, has reacted by launching a new, high-end camellia oil product. Kerry's Arawana brand oil and COFCO's Fortune brand products are established rivals in China's mid-level cooking oil market.

## Singapore Firm Pays \$120 Million for Malls

By Qiu Jiaoning

Singapore-based CapitaLand, Southeast Asia's largest property developer, has established a joint venture with Shenzhen International Trust & Investment Co. to buy and manage six shopping malls in China that will open between mid-2005 and early 2006, *China Business News* reported last Saturday.

CapitaLand will initially invest \$120 million for a control of 51 percent stake in the malls, the largest tenants of which will be Wal-Mart Stores Inc. The two partners will also invest over \$500 million to develop another 14 retail malls within one year.

Shenzhen International Trust & Investment also holds a 35 percent stake in a joint venture with Wal-Mart, which along with other local partners operates 38 stores in 18 Chinese cities. Li Nangfeng, the domestic company's chairman, said at a news conference in Singapore that his firm was in separate talks with an unidentified American property company about developing more malls for Wal-Mart outlets.

## Two Foreign Banks OK'd for RMB Services

By Deng Minjie

Hong Kong and Shanghai Banking Corp (HSBC) and Standard Chartered Bank announced last Thursday that their Beijing branches had obtained approval from the China Banking Regulatory Commission to provide renminbi services.

"We will provide renminbi services as soon as possible, and while we are preparing, Standard Chartered will inject an additional 100 million yuan into our branch," Yin Yingguang, vice president of Standard Chartered's Beijing arm told *Beijing Today* Tuesday.

HSBC was the first foreign bank to apply for a renminbi license in Beijing and one of the first to get the green light. The bank has also received approval to found a sub-branch in Beijing, expected to open in the first half of 2005. HSBC has announced plans to inject an additional 100 million yuan into its Beijing branch to bring its total operating capital up to 300 million yuan.

Bank of Tokyo-Mitsubishi and Citibank reportedly did not get approval to enter renminbi service competition.

## Property and Casualty Insurer Approved

By Sun Yongjian

The establishment of a new property and casualty insurance company has been approved by government authorities, making it the nineteenth domestic insurer allowed into the opening field since June, the *Beijing News* reported Tuesday.

Beijing-based Sunlight Property and Casualty Co. would start with 1.1 billion in registered capital and was being set up by several state-owned enterprises, including Sinopec, China Southern Airlines, China Shipbuilding Industry Corp., and SinoTrans. The total assets of the shareholders amounted to several trillion yuan, the report said.

The company would be developed into a comprehensive insurer providing property, casualty and life insurance policies, it said.

Zhang Weigong, former president of Guangdong Provincial Insurance Regulatory Bureau, would serve as chairman and general manager of the new company, the newspaper said.

## Annual Underground Credit Tops 700 Billion Yuan

By Annie Wei

An investigation into underground financing in China has revealed that between 740 billion and 800 billion yuan in illegal credit was dealt out in 2003.

Complete results of the investigation, conducted by the University of Finance and Economics, would be released by the end of March, university professor and project leader Li Jianjun said Wednesday.

"The study was done to assess the situation of un-

derground financing and offer suggestions to related government bodies," Li said.

He added research for the study was conducted by over 70 teams in 20 provinces between January and February.

Researchers included local residents, bank employees and farmers.

Li said the figure for underground loans was equal to 30 percent of all legal credit provided nationwide in 2003.

"The research was difficult



# Disease Could Double Tsunami Death Toll

Banda Aceh, Indonesia, December 29 (AFP) – Disease epidemics could double the death toll in Asia’s tidal wave catastrophe – which already stands at more than 55,000 – experts warned as the world’s biggest ever relief operation stuttered into life against enormous odds.

It is feared that rotting corpses, smashed sewers and contaminated water combined with a lack of food and shelter, along with mosquito-borne diseases such as dengue fever and malaria, could wipe out weakened survivors in their tens of thousands.

“The immediate terror associated

with the tsunamis and the earthquake itself may be dwarfed by the longer term suffering of the affected communities,” said David Nabarro, the top official at the World Health Organization dealing with humanitarian crises.

“There is a chance that we could have at least as many dying from communicable diseases as we had dying from the tsunami,” he added as the horrors from the waves of death which engulfed wealthy tourists and the poor alike continued to be revealed on coastlines around the region.

Food and medicine was already desperately short in many stricken areas and

Guido Bertolaso, an Italian civil emergency chief who is coordinating European Union rescue operations, warned the overall death toll could surpass 100,000.

The task of preventing this second wave of suffering is daunting and unprecedented. UN disaster relief coordinator Jan Egeland said relief operations would be the biggest in history, urging the immediate burial of human victims and the disposal of dead animals before they infect drinking water.

Yvette Stevens, UN Assistant Emergency Relief aid coordinator, said the international aid needed for the areas around the Indian Ocean was likely to

exceed the previous record UN appeal of 1.6 billion dollars.

“We face a huge challenge due to the vast area affected,” Markku Niskala, secretary general of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, said in Geneva, adding: “We haven’t even seen the tip of the iceberg yet.”

While the aid organizations made their plans, governments around the world pledged cash and dispatched ships and aircraft on rescue and relief missions, the millions of bereaved and homeless faced a seemingly hopeless task of rebuilding their shattered lives.

## Sony and Samsung to Cross-license Patents

Tokyo, December 14 (Reuters) – Sony Corp. and Samsung Electronics said on Tuesday they had agreed to share patents on basic technology to speed up product development and avoid adding to a growing number of cross-border patent disputes.

The cross-licensing deal allows the Japanese and South Korean electronics giants to tap each other’s vast patent portfolios on basic technologies. However, it will exclude key technologies that help differentiate their products, such as those related to Sony’s hit PlayStation game consoles.

The cross-licensing agreement covers 94 percent of Sony’s 13,000 US registered patents, and a similar percentage of Samsung’s 11,000 U.S. registered patents.

The remainders are viewed as “differentiation technology patents” and will remain the sole property of each company.

Patents to be shared include technologies on data compression, DVD, DRAM and flash memory chips. The agreement excludes thin film transistor liquid crystal display (TFT-LCD) and organic light emitting diode (OLED) display patents.

Sony and Samsung have an LCD joint venture that is scheduled to begin mass production of LCD panels by the end of June.

### Analyst’s Take:

*It is competition in price that has become the notable feature of the electronics industry. Hence, the main electronics companies have been trying their best to launch the most advanced technology and the newest products in order to gain market share as much as possible before the price falls.*

*In recent years, Sony has failed to play a vanguard role in developing new products such as digital television so that its market share has gradually trailed behind other Japanese electronics companies. For instance, Sharp took up 48.1 percent of the world market share in the field of liquid crystal TV while Sony had only 14.9 percent in 2003. Sony therefore has decided to concentrate on developing liquid crystal TV, in which field Samsung leads the way in terms of technology.*

*Under the cooperation, Sony will make good use of Samsung’s existing technology, components and parts, and market superiority to lower production costs and boost market share. With Sony’s technology and investment, Samsung can sharpen its competitive edge to catch up with and surpass other Japanese rivals. The cooperation between Sony and Samsung is aiming at preserving each other’s competitive edge.*

*As the global competition heats up, electronics giants have already started seeking a balance between competition and cooperation. The cooperation between Sony and Samsung includes their common strategic objective in the field of ultra-thin television.*

*Such multinational cooperation is hedged with conditions because competition still exists after all. In order to ensure their uniqueness, electronics companies will not risk the key technologies that are vital for them to gain profit and success. However, the coexistence and combination of competition and cooperation is undoubtedly a development trend in the global electronics industry.*

– Liu Junhong, associate research fellow of the Institute of Japanese Studies at the China Institute of Contemporary International Relations (Qiu Jiaoning)



## Worlds Apart

*While in some parts of the globe people cling to life, in others, they get ready to ring in the new year. Tsunami victims in Trincomalee, Sri Lanka, are waiting for food and life necessities in refugee camps (right). A visitor is taking photos of the crystal ball in New York’s Times Square, ready for the new year’s celebration (above).*

Xinhua Photo



## Venezuela Opens Oil Market to China

Beijing, December 27 (New York Times) – President Hugo Chávez of Venezuela wrapped up a four-day visit to China on Sunday with agreements that promise to open Venezuela’s oil and natural gas fields to China.

Under the agreements, Chinese companies will gain development rights to 15 oil fields in eastern Venezuela, and China will also be allowed to build oil refineries there.

President Chávez praised the agreements as an opportunity to reduce his country’s dependence on oil sales to the United States, which has opposed his government’s leftist policies. He said Venezuela also invited China to help Venezuela establish a government-owned oil corporation.

China has been trying to ensure greater access to oil supplies abroad to satisfy the growing demand of its booming economy. Venezuela offered to export 120,000 barrels of oil a month to China, and President Chávez said his country was planning to expand a pipeline across Panama to speed oil shipments to China across the Pacific Ocean.

Venezuela exports 60 percent its oil production to the United States. The amount of oil that President Chávez offered comes to less than 0.2 percent of the 2.7 million barrels that China is expected to import

this year. Oil imports by China are about a third higher than last year, and account for close to half of its total oil consumption.

**Analyst’s Take:**

*The agreement is a new achievement in China’s “strategy of external oriented development” in which domestic enterprises are encouraged to pursue development in the international market. It’s especially significant in guaranteeing the safety of China’s oil supply because China relies heavily on oil imports.*

*China’s oil links have been stretched to many countries and areas in the world, and cooperative relations in oil development have been established with countries such as Iran, Iraq and Saudi Arabia in the Middle East, Norway in Northern Europe and Canada.*

*As an important member of OPEC, Venezuela has a large oil reserve. Domestic oil enterprises will benefit from the cooperation when their technical advantages in oil exploration and development are exploited in that country.*

*China has been a net oil import country since 1994 and our domestic output of crude oil in 2020 is expected to reach 160 million to 200 million tons which means the newly increased*

*demand for oil will continue to rely mainly on imports. So the issue of oil supply safety is becoming more and more important.*

*Thus, domestic oil enterprises are encouraged by the government to participate in the international market and acquire more resources.*

*Two indicators should be noticed, by means of which people can judge what kind of benefit domestic enterprises will enjoy in Venezuela. One is how much market share domestic enterprises will win in the local market when facing competitors from other countries and areas; the other is the profit rate the enterprises can obtain.*

*China will play a more and more important role in the international oil market when international oil cooperation is improved but the cooperation also offers a benefit for Venezuela because Chinese enterprises will introduce advanced technology in oil exploration and development to that country.*

*But the bilateral cooperation will not affect the domestic oil price because it is directly pegged to international prices.*

– Deng Yusong, deputy chief of the Institute of Market Economics, the Development and Research Center of the State Council (Sun Yongjian)

## EU to Introduce New CAP

Brussels, December 23 (Xinhua) – A total of 10 European Union member States are to introduce a fundamental reform of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) from January 1, 2005.

According to the EU executive European Commission, the reform completely changes the way the EU supports its farm sector and most subsidies will be paid independently from the volume of production.

These new “single farm payments”, or single payment scheme (SPS), will be closely linked to the respect of environmental, food safety and animal welfare standards.

Severing the link between subsidies and production will make EU farmers more competitive and market orientated, while providing the necessary income stability. More money will be available to farmers for environmental, quality or animal

welfare programs by reducing direct payments for bigger farms.

The 25 EU member States will have from between 2005 and 2007 to apply the SPS.

**Analyst’s Take:**

*The new Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) was in fact agreed on in June last year among the EU member states. The CAP will take effect from the beginning of 2005 to allow more of Europe’s farmers to become true entrepreneurs in the future.*

*The policy will not only offer Europe’s farmers the freedom to produce what the market wants, but also give consumers what they want. The changes will offer taxpayers more transparency and contribute to more market-oriented farm trade.*

*I think there are two main reasons which spurred the EU executive committee to conduct a policy reform*

*for the CAP in the 1990s. One was the increase in foodstuff production in the EU; the other was to shorten the financial gap between rural and urban areas.*

*At the moment, the SFP accounts for around 70 per cent of the total common financial payout of the EU. It’s obviously a heavy financial burden. In order to lighten the load and spread more capital support to depressed areas of the EU, it’s necessary to sever the link between subsidies and production. What’s more, it will contribute to easing the conflict in farm trade between the EU and US.*

*Perhaps the principal benefit of the new CAP is that it will encourage farming diversity, and this will help the EU’s agriculture market to become more competitive in the world market in future.*

– Zhang Jianxiong, Professor from the Institute of European Studies, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (Deng Minjie)

## US Airways Wants Free New Year’s Help

Philadelphia, December 29 (AP) – US Airways is trying to recruit volunteers willing to work for free over the New Year’s weekend at Philadelphia’s airport in order to avoid a repeat of a Christmas fiasco that left the struggling airline with too few workers to fly its planes and process baggage.

Separately, the airline warned employees it would review the attendance records of those who called in sick over the Christmas holiday – and to discipline workers who abused the sick time system.

In a message to its employees Tuesday, US Airways sought volunteers willing to give up their New Year’s Eve plans and work as customer greeters, ramp agents or baggage sorters. The request seeks workers only at Philadelphia, a major hub for the Arlington, Va.-based airline.

While the volunteers will not be paid for extra shifts, employees will be paid for regularly scheduled work, US Airways spokesman David Castelveter emphasized Wednesday. Company executives and managers would be taking part in the volunteer program, he said.

## Asian Phone Makers Dial Up Happy UK Christmas

December 29 (FT.com) – Asian handset makers have grabbed the top slots for Christmas mobile phone sales in the UK, pushing Nokia’s top-selling models into second place.

Mobile phone retailers report that a folding “clamshell” handset from NEC was the season’s most popular mobile phone on pay-as-you-go tariffs. The popularity of the phone is a coup for the Japanese handset vendor, which has traditionally had a low profile in Europe.

It is also a sign of the increased competition that Nokia is facing from Asian handset vendors in Europe. The UK market is a leading indicator of trends in the rest of the continent.

At its peak, Nokia captured more than half of all mobile phone sales in Europe. Its share is believed to have fallen to about 40 percent.

The Link, the British mobile phone retailer owned by Dixons Group, said NEC’s 616 handset was the most popular phone on pay-as-you go tariffs, while LG of Korea captured the number one slot on contract tariffs with its 8120 folding videophone.

## Creditors, LG to Compromise on Rescue

Seoul, December 29 (AFP) – South Korea’s top financial watchdog says LG Group and its creditors will eventually compromise over how to rescue LG Card in order to avoid the demise of the country’s largest card issuer.

Shares of LG Card were up 5.4 percent at 15,500 won, with investors betting the company would be rescued, if only at the last minute.

Korea Development Bank and other creditors have given the LG Group until late Wednesday to join a new 1.1-billion-dollar rescue package to rescue its former card unit.

If it does not, they have threatened to liquidate LG Card and hit the LG Group by cutting credit lines to the country’s second largest conglomerate.

“They (creditors and LG Group) appear to be at odds with each other but I think they are on the way to a compromise,” Financial Supervisory Commission chairman Yoon Jeung-Hyun said.

## PeopleSoft CEO Resigns

San Jose, California December 29 (AP) – PeopleSoft Inc. founder David A. Duffield, who returned as chief executive during the company’s losing battle to escape Oracle Corp.’s takeover, has quit the software maker weeks before the deal closes, according to a regulatory filing Tuesday.

Duffield resigned as CEO, chairman and director on December 21, according to the brief document filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission. He had been chief executive since October, when the board unexpectedly fired then-CEO Craig Conway.

Earlier this month, PeopleSoft ended the 18-month saga by agreeing to Oracle’s sweetened terms. The \$10.3 billion deal, which will create the world’s No. 2 business applications software maker after Germany’s SAP AG, is expected to close early next month.



By Dong Nan

Family, friends, well-wishers and the media thronged to Beijing Capital Airport on Wednesday to watch the return of 97 Beijing tourists who had been stranded in the Thai resort island of Phuket after Sunday's disastrous tsunami, the total death toll from which could surpass 100,000 people, Xinhua said yesterday.

The local people had been part of a tour organized by Kanghui Travel Agency, Hong Kong and Chinese Travel International and the Beijing branch of China Travel and left Beijing on December 24.

"The tsunami came at us out of nowhere," Li Lei, one of the returned tourists, told *Beijing Youth Daily*. "At the time, we did not know what was happening until other people around us starting running up a hill."

"The tides rose higher and higher and the water reached my neck," said Zhang Qi, Li's girlfriend. "I was almost swept away, but fortunately a tourist from South Africa caught hold of me. I was terrified."

Zhang, Li and the other tourists spent Sunday afternoon and night atop a hill overlooking the destruction before being rescued by a life boat the next day.

"None of the tourists were injured. Most of them spent their holidays in hotels and they were very composed when the tsunami hit and understood the situation," Jia Yiyuan, president of Kanghui Travel Agency told the Xinhua news agency.

Two Chinese tourists, Liang Shiwei of Hong Kong and Liao Fengshun of Taiwan, died in the disaster and around 400 were still missing, *China Daily* said on Thursday.

Five of the missing were from the Chinese mainland, 388 from Hong Kong and eight from Taiwan, the newspaper said.

Seven Chinese tourists had received medical care for light injuries in Phuket

# Tsunami Devastates Asia, Beijing Tourists Safely Back Home



Safe and sound in Beijing Capital Airport on Wednesday, Zhang Qi (with flowers) recalls her brush with death. "I was almost swept away, but fortunately a tourist from South Africa caught hold of me. I was terrified."

Photo by Wei Tong

and they had all since recovered and returned to China, Pan Guangxue, a counselor at the Chinese Embassy to Thailand, was quoted as saying by Xinhua on Wednesday.

Pan said the Chinese Embassy was doing its utmost to find the missing.

So far, 486 mainland tourists had left Phuket to return home and more would be back in China soon, Pan said. Jia Yiyuan predicted temporarily cancelled tours to popular Phuket would resume

before the Spring Festival.

By Thursday, the death toll from Sunday's tsunami across South and Southeast Asia surpassed 80,000 people.

The deadly waves were triggered by a strong earthquake in the Indian Ocean off the west coast of the Indonesian island of Sumatra on Sunday morning, which the China Seismological Bureau has said registered 8.7 on the Richter scale. The US Geological

Survey has said the earthquake measured 9.0, making it the fourth largest in the world since 1900.

China has sent aid including blankets, tents, bedding, food and medical equipment to affected countries, Foreign Ministry spokesman Liu Jianchao said on Tuesday.

"The government will provide over 21 million yuan in aid for victims in Asian countries hit by the massive earthquake and devastating waves," Liu said.



Wang Hai points the finger at Nanjiren's NGGGN underwear products.

Photo by Zhu Dongsong

## Consumer Crusader Says Underwear Brand Full of Hot Air

By Wang Fang

Wang Hai, China's most renowned consumer protection advocate told *Beijing Youth Daily* on Monday that long underwear products made by Nanjiren, under the unpronounceable brand name NGGGN, were not as warm as claimed.

Keeping people warm was the essential function of long underwear, and products that failed to do so or made exaggerated claims of their abilities harmed consumers' rights, Wang said, sporting his signature sunglasses and close-cropped haircut.

"A paper issued by the State Cotton Textile Products Quality Supervision and Examination Center proved that Nanjiren underclothes did not meet their labeled content on nine indexes such as fiber content and warmth retention," Wang said.

The label on Nanjiren long underwear products claimed they were made of 6.3 percent camel hair and 0.3 percent wool, but the examination turned up no traces of either type of fiber, he said. And while the products' packaging said they had a heat-retention capacity of 55 to 80 percent, tests came up with a figure of just around 30 percent.

Wang reminded *Beijing Youth Daily* that Nanjiren underwear products were honored as "examination exempt products" by the State Quality Control Department in 2004 and that they could also use the "3·15" logo, a mark of quality granted by the Chinese Consumers Association.

"In 2000, some enterprises were allowed to use the '3·15' logo, which meant that they promised to follow mediation by the association in cases of violation of customers' rights. These enterprises also turned in a certain amount of money in advance to the association to assure there were funds for compensation," the deputy secretary of the association, who was not named, told *Beijing Youth Daily*.

Zhang Yuxiang, president of Shanghai Nanjiren Textile Products Development Co. said, "The devices used in the examination are different from the ones we use."

Wang said on Tuesday that he had already submitted an administrative suit to the State Quality Control Bureau and Chinese Consumers Association calling for the Nanjiren products to lose their quality control exemption and right to the "3·15" logo.

The two organizations confirmed to *Beijing Youth Daily* they had accepted Wang's suits.

## Five Jailers Face Trial for Allowing Daring Escape

By Wang Fang

Five policemen working at the Chuanzhong Prison in Nanchong, Sichuan Province, stood before a court on Monday on charges that their dereliction of duty allowed two prisoners on death row to escape the jail in March, the local *Huaxi Dushi* newspaper reported this week.

The two escapees, Chen Sanfu and Hong Jinxing, are still at large and have been listed by the Ministry of Public Security as A-level escaped criminals.

The court accepted a plea from Chuanzhong Prison for a closed hearing and had yet to release its final decision, the newspaper said.

Chen and Hong became friends in 2002 at Chuanzhong Prison, where both were sent on death sentences with two-year reprieves, it said.

Using mobile phones, they began to concoct an escape plan in 2003 that would involve Hong Zhong, a friend on the outside who would provide them with a get-



The two convicts who broke out of Chuanzhong Prison in March remain at large.

away car, wigs and clothes.

Around the same time, Chen was assigned to be a teacher of other inmates in the prison's school. He hatched an escape plan of breaking through a classroom's barred windows, in front of an area sometimes patrolled by armed guards, and jumping down the six-meter high wall to freedom.

Chen and Hong started surreptitiously collecting the needed materials, including iron plates, wood blocks, hacksaws and screws, and used them to make a 6.1-meter long plank this March.

## Four Jailed for Peddling Porn Online

By Zhou Ying

The Beijing Municipal High People's Court last Saturday overturned an appeal from four men and sentenced them to fines and prison terms for creating and profiting from pornographic websites.

The court upheld the original judgment of the Beijing No. 1 Intermediate People's Court on October 14 against Liang Hongbin, Li Yufei, Yu Jianhong, and Chen Dong, who face 15,000 to 25,000 yuan in fines each and one to two-and-a-half years behind bars.

It was the first case of online pornographic peddling cracked

in China after the country launched a national battle against explicit website content in July, the court noted.

Liang, a former IT engineer with NetEase.com Corp., rented an Internet server in Beijing in May with Li, an unemployed man from Henan Province, the Beijing-based Mirror newspaper reported Saturday.

They then signed a contract with Yu and Chen, who ran websites with more than 20 pornographic movies, to shift the sites to Liang and Li's server.

As a precaution, they posted

instructions on their websites telling surfers who wanted to watch or download the clips to first get entry passwords by sending messages from their mobile phones to certain preset numbers.

The websites got more than 16,000 hits and generated more than 16,000 yuan in profits for the four before July 12, when the sites were shut down.

Liu Xiang, the judge who presided over the first case in the Intermediate Court, told the China Times in October that some of the four men had never met. "All the business communication between the four was conducted over the Internet," she added.

## Court Says Nike Swiped Local Designers Lines

By Dong Nan

A Beijing court on Wednesday ruled that Nike's "stickman" mascot violated the copyright on a similar figure held by Zhu Zhiqiang, a 28-year-old local flash designer.



The Beijing No. 1 Intermediate People's Court said the American sporting goods giant should publish a public apology to Zhu on sina.com, a website that ran Nike's "stickman" ads last October, and pay him 300,000 yuan in compensation.

"My commercial interests were severely damaged by Nike's illegal use of my logo, which I registered for copyright protection in 2000," Zhu told the domestic media in July.

Nike released the ad featuring a character similar to Zhu's linear creation last year around China to promote its new Shox Status TB sporting shoes. Zhu heard about the spots and filed his suit this July, claiming he was the designer and registered owner of the figure.

However, Nike's legal representative Zhang told the media in July that Zhu's stick figure looked and gestured differently than the character in the company's ads and criticized Zhu for trying to promote himself and his flash works by attacking a high-profile multinational corporation. Zhang said the inspiration for Nike's "stickman" came from a similar image in the public domain.

"From mural and stone paintings in ancient times to Sherlock Holmes stories, the logo has been used repeatedly," said Zhang.

The court decided that Zhu's design was different than similar designs in the public domain due to the thickness and solidity of its lines and said his creation was valid for patent protection.

## Purging Poor Public Art

By Pan Hao

Fifteen sculptures around Beijing have been called the worst of the 1,836 pieces of public art in the city by the Beijing City Sculpture Management Office and will be removed, Beijing Television reported on Tuesday.

In the office's classification, 1,277 sculptures were deemed to have merit and 544 were marked as average.

The first public sculpture assessment in Beijing covered 18 districts and zones and was conducted between April and November 30.

The office said it had released a legal outline to ensure public art be carefully planned and built and set four main themes for designs, namely capital, historical development, city and culture and specialized culture.

## Beaten Doctors Receive Condolence Cash

By Liu Zhaoxi

Fifteen physicians assaulted by angry patients or their families this year have received condolence bonuses from the Beijing Physicians Association, Chang Xiaoyan, deputy chief secretary of the association told the *Beijing Morning Post* Tuesday.

The bonuses, ranging from 500 to 5,000 yuan, were only granted to association members, whose annual fees of 60 yuan per person were the primary source of the compensation funds, Chang said.

"The money is simply meant as a condolence from the association to the doctors who have suffered assaults and beatings," he was quoted as saying, noting the payments could in no way solve the problem of defending physicians from such attacks.

Assaults on doctors are not infrequent in Beijing, but there are no standards for compensating injured people and no ways to determine just how many physicians and medical professionals have been attacked because many do not report such incidents, according to Chang.

She urged local physicians to join the association, which now has about 10,000 members, representing one-fifth of the doctors in Beijing, to better protect their rights.



Photo by Nan Yun

## Shoppers Go Silly For Silver

By Zhou Ying

It took less than three hours for all 200 silver ingots available at the Caishikou Department Store in Xuanwu District to sell out on Tuesday.

The ingots, the first of their kind put on the local market in decades, came in four weights of five, 10, 20 and 50 liang, meaning roughly 150 grams to 1,500 grams, and were priced between 700 and 6,980 yuan.

"One liang is equal to 31.25 grams. So when we sold the ingots

at a price of 4.5 yuan per gram, it meant the silver was half the price of most silver jewelry," Wang Chunli, general manager of the department store told *Beijing Star Daily* on Monday.

No one at the department store expected the ingots to strike such a nerve with shoppers, *Beijing Youth Daily* reported.

"Since they generated so much demand, we have decided to get more of these things," Wang was quoted as saying.



By Liu Zhaoxi

**L**iu Yihua, a retiree living in Beijing, stood all the way on the bus despite vacant seats around her, looking out of the window. She was simply excited to be on her first trip in the gleaming new bus on Tuesday, running in an exclusive lane for the capital's new Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) network.

The first BRT route in Beijing, between Qianmen and Muxiyuan, opened on Christmas day. The new public transportation system has exclusive lanes separated by metal fences from the rest of the road. But the fence disappears between Tiantan west gate and Qianmen and the bus travels together with other vehicles. BRT staff at the Qianmen terminal told *Beijing Today* that the fences were expected to be set up next year. The 18-meter-long new style buses are wider than regular buses and have the capacity for over 200 passengers. The bus opens on the left side and people get on and off at special platforms, where tickets are sold. It costs two yuan for one trip that takes about 20 minutes.

The five-kilometer route is only the initial section of a larger plan. In the near future, the route will extend south by a further 11 kilometers to Demaozhuang, outside the Fifth Ring Road. According to the bulletin board at the Qianmen terminal, by 2008, the city is expected to have 200 kilometers of BRT network.

In August 2003, the amount of vehicles in Beijing surpassed two million, marking the city's entry into an era of heavy traffic jams. The Beijing government has been making various efforts to develop public transportation and alleviate traffic jams, and BRT is one of the results, according to the official website of Beijing Municipal Committee of Communication. BRT is generally considered cheaper than track transportation and has much greater capacity than traditional buses. The committee decided on establish-

# Make Way for the Big Bus



The first BRT route in Beijing, between Qianmen and Muxiyuan, opened on Christmas day.

Photo by Beijing Youth Daily

ing the BRT network late last year, and construction started early this year.

Liu said she would take BRT regularly from now on, but not everyone thinks it's such a good idea.

**Qian Linbo**, vice-director at Nanjing Institute of Transportation Planning: **BRT puts more pressure on limited road resources**

BRT is an organic system and its formation will influence existing public transportation systems. The key issue of BRT is the special right to an area of the road, which concerns the allocation of limited space resources. To take such a large piece of space out of already strained road resources, as well as to control the traffic on the other lanes, is such change of scale realistic? It's going to be tough in practice.

(From *International Financial News*)

**Ji Changxu**, professor at Beijing Jiaotong University: **better coordination should be set up between the new and traditional bus systems**

I'm concerned that because the monthly pass is not applicable to the new bus, many people will still stick to the traditional buses, and therefore the new ones will not attract that many passengers. Consequently, the profits cannot be guaranteed and the new system could fail. It is important to set up a good interest-share system to harmonize the interests between the new bus and old ones. The ticket system for BRT and traditional buses should also be integrated. Otherwise, already crowded roads could become more crowded due to as-

signing lanes to the BRT, but the BRT still could not be put into full use. BRT should be a trend and the opening of more routes would greatly improve the public transportation in Beijing, which already lags behind many other big cities.

**Anonymous ticket seller on a Beijing bus: the new bus has an impact on regular buses**

One section of our route overlaps with the BRT, which will definitely have an impact on us. Fewer people will take our bus on that section, as the BRT is faster. I don't think the BRT will help to relieve traffic jams unless the roads are widened.

**Li Yili**, enterprise administrator: **bus routes need to be rearranged**

Many other buses are taking the same route, and the BRT will have

an impact on them. The bus company should rearrange the routes, cancel or merge some as needed.

**Ren Li**, art worker: **it is a nice thing**

I think it's very necessary to establish BRT in the city. After all, there are more people taking public transportation. Not many people can afford taxis or private cars. There are so many people taking public transportation in Beijing. If it's always jammed on the bus, people will feel it's so inconvenient. But the rapid bus is fast. I don't think claiming one lane will have much impact. The current roads are already wide enough and to set aside one lane is no big deal.

**Zhang Hong**, Beijing citizen: **the BRT does not suit people's every-day needs**

It's not convenient to take the BRT buses. Their doors face a different direction from the regular buses. If you want to transfer to that bus from the regular ones, you have to go across the street to get on it. The price of BRT is a little bit expensive and the monthly pass is not applicable. Many working people, who are not making a whole lot of money, won't spend the cash everyday to take the bus to go to work. I won't take it if I don't have special needs. It is only useful for tourists, and for people to have some fun.

**Zhang Zilong**, print factory worker: **BRT should consider suburban residents**

Because of the rebuilding of the city, many people have moved to the suburbs. They go to work by taking the bus but it is always jammed, wasting people's time and causing them to make less money. Without a rapid bus, what can they do? The rapid bus should not be limited to within the city, but should also cover the suburbs.

## Soundbites

"Willpower is what keeps you going," said **Sunday**

**Munnaswamy** Tuesday, standing in the broken cement frame where she sold seashells, stone carvings and textiles. She lost her two shops Sunday morning, but her family survived the deluge that killed 15 townspeople. When the tsunami struck the ancient pilgrimage town of Mahabalipuram, India, the sea water broke around a 1,200-year-old temple on the shore and destroyed the 80 tourist shops lined up next to it. Now, she says, they'll do the same thing they and their ancestors have done every time disaster strikes: get a loan, buy new inventory and get back to work.

"What a terrible tragedy," said **Dr. David Nabarro**, head of crisis operations for the World Health Organization, referring to the tsunami disaster that hit Southeast Asia on Sunday. The WHO has warned that disease in the aftermath of the tsunami could kill as many people as the deadly waves and earthquake have. The confirmed deaths soared above 800,000 on Wednesday, and the UN health agency warned disease could double the toll.

"I don't believe that. I'm going to check. The way he's playing, he's got to be 30," **Boston Celtics coach Doc Rivers** joked recently when told about the December 30, 1984 birthday of LeBron James, the NBA basketball player for Cleveland. On Thursday, LeBron hit the big 2-0 and, hard to believe, he has already joined the NBA's elite. In the first third of the season, James has confirmed his status as the most promising young player in the game, becoming the youngest player to reach 500 career assists and rebounds and was named the Eastern Conference's top player for November.

"The three words I have to summarize my experience ... is 'God is good,'" said **Camille Hammond**, after she saw her triplets, two boys and one girl, delivered by her mother, Tina Cade, a 55-year-old woman, as a surrogate Tuesday in Richmond, Virginia. Camille Hammond, the oldest daughter of Cade, suffers from endometriosis, a condition that affects the lining of the uterus and makes it difficult to become pregnant.

"I'm free, I'm free. I can go where I want," said **Tyler Howard**, a 14-year-old quadriplegic who has been in a wheelchair for 10 years. He received the specially modified van of the late actor of his all-time favorite film hero "Superman", Christopher Reeve last Thursday from Reeve's family, so he can get around with his wheelchair and other medical equipment. Reeve died on October 10, 52, of complications from an infection caused by a bed sore. After his May 1995 horse riding accident, Reeve became a spokesman for spinal cord injury victims. (Edited by Lene Chau)

By Liu Zhaoxi

**S**tarting January 1, 2005, citizens in Shenyang, northeastern Liaoning Province, will no longer be able to hang their underwear out to dry. A newly established city regulation, released by Shenyang Municipal People's Congress, set a fine of up to 100 yuan for those who hang their underwear on the balcony, porch or outside the window facing the main streets, *Business Times*, a local newspaper reported last week. After the regulation was made public, it soon became a subject of heated debate across the nation.

**Liu Ye**, official at Shenyang Municipal People's Congress: **underwear facing the street does not look nice**

The regulation says that things damaging the appearance of the city should not be put or hung on the balcony, porch, roof or outside the window facing the streets. We'll provide specific interpretations of the regulation during its enforcement. To my personal understanding, "things damaging the appearance of the city" should include underwear. It just doesn't look nice.

**Peng Yuanwen**, citizen of Guangzhou: **what is a civilized city?**

Many cities are trying to be civilized. But what is a civilized city? A city without visible underwear, or one where people can live a convenient life? The municipal government feels a city where you can't see the underwear is civilized, while the regular folks would prefer one where they can conveniently hang their underwear out to dry. (From the *Southern Metropolitan Daily*)

**Zhang Xiaomeng**, staff member at Peking University: **I don't like seeing underwear hung outside**

I think underwear hung outside is ugly. Besides, underwear is something somehow related to personal privacy, but some people insist on showing it to the public. Sometimes, you walk on the streets and you brush against this stuff, which I think is not good either for pedestrians or the owners. But it's been a long-time habit for Chinese people to

# Cleaning up the Cityscape



Hanging clothes outside to dry is a common practice in China

air dry their laundry so solutions should be provided while the prohibition is enforced.

**James Copling**, American citizen: **air drying underwear in the US would be laughed at**

I certainly understand the government's desire to create a more visually appealing city. Seeing underwear hanging outside someone's balcony suggests to a visitor that the people are somewhat uneducated and have no sense of decorum. For Americans, someone

in the United States air drying their underwear in the city might be viewed as not having any common sense, and they would certainly be the butt of jokes in the neighborhood.

**Rebekah Thomure**, American citizen: **it is a normal practice to hang laundry out to dry in the US**

In the part of the US where I grew up, many people often hung their laundry (including undergarments) outside. This was always considered a normal prac-

tice, and a good way to save money. In some cities they hang clothes on lines between tall buildings. In general, however, most people in the US use a dryer to dry their clothing. I don't think this has as much to do with privacy as it does with convenience.

**Christina Miller**, American college student: **hanging clothing outside may be a distinguishing Chinese cultural characteristic**

China is a very crowded country, and to say that people cannot

dry clothes outside just gives everyone fewer ways to do laundry! I like the fact that seeing clothing outside may be a distinguishing Chinese cultural characteristic. It makes China more interesting and colorful, in my opinion. Americans are perhaps too concerned with what their neighbors think, which is why they may disapprove of drying underwear outside, and those worries are a disease that I'd hate to see other cultures catch.



# Consumers Bemoan ‘Tyrant Terms’

Survey shows China swamped by fine print and unfair commercial conditions

By Dong Nan

Mobile phone charge cards that become useless after their short time limits end, fees for community services when none are provided, difficulties squeezing compensation from insurance companies... These are just some of the unfair situations that Chinese consumers around the country face on a troublingly regular basis.

The popular term for such unfair treatment is *bawang tiaokuan*, which translates to “tyrannical terms”, and a survey conducted by the Social Survey of China (SSIC) and released this month shows that such commercial coercion is widespread across many important industries and services.

Yet few people surveyed said they were ready to take action or thought the problem could be solved in the near future.

## No escape

When asked “how familiar are you with unfair terms and treatment?”, 8.21% of respondents said “very familiar”, 40.3% said “familiar”, 46.77% said “somewhat familiar”, 4.11% said “barely familiar” and 0.61% said “unfamiliar.” It would be hard to argue that the majority of people in this country had not had some taste of unfair treatment.

People were even more resolute in their opinions about how widespread such terms were. Some 43.89% of those surveyed thought unfair terms were “extremely widespread” and 51.45% said “widespread”, while only 3.89% chose “not widespread”, 0.76% said “very rare”, and no one answered “do not exist.”

A whopping 97.46% of people said they had suffered as a result of unfair terms, among whom 17.46% said they encountered such treatment “very often,” 52.7% chose “often” 26.94% answered “sometimes” and a mere 2.9% responded “seldom.”

“The results show that unfair terms exist widely in our society, and almost every consumer has suffered from them,” Li Dongmin, president of the SSIC and leader of the survey told *Beijing Today*.

## Top 10 perpetrators

The 10 industries or services most connected to consumer frustration over unfair terms were telecommunications (87.6%), real



Telecom companies are considered most guilty of trapping customers with unfair terms. “Compared to product and service providers, consumers right now are at a real disadvantage. The costs for them to protect their rights often exceed their losses from unfair terms” – Li Dongmin, president of Social Survey of China

estate and community services (54.4%), insurance (51.3%), electrical power supply (48.7%), education (38%), medical care (29.8%), banks (22.5%), railway transportation (19.8%), public transportation (17.1%) and supermarkets (15.7%).

The three specific terms most frequently called “tyrannical” by survey respondents were connected directly to telecommunications. Top on the list was “mobile phone charge cards not be able to be used once they pass certain time limits,” followed by “when ADSL connections fail or are slow but charges remain the same,” and “when mobile phone signals fail and servers do not take responsibility.”

Li said that with increasing mobile phone, telephone and Internet use, modern communication was an important part of many people’s lives and therefore more likely to be a painful subject.

Regarding real estate and community services, many people complained that developers and property managers used unfair contracts to make buyers more liable in cases of broken contracts and used fine print and different “tricks” to dupe con-

## Twenty Guilties Industries (Based on percentages of positive answers from respondents)

Industries or services	Percentage
1 Telecommunication	87.6
2 Real estate and community services	54.4
3 Insurance	51.3
4 Electrical power supply	48.7
5 Education	38
6 Medical care	29.8
7 Bank services	22.5
8 Railway transportation	19.8
9 Public transportation	17.1
10 Supermarket	15.7
11 Gas supply	11.6
12 Postal services	11.3
13 Catering	10.7
14 Agency services	10.5
15 Tourism	10.2
16 Medical care	9.9
17 Transportation	8.0
18 Automobile sales	7.7
19 Tobacco sales	7.1
20 Air transportation	7.1

sumers into paying more money.

Many respondents said that when they bought their homes, contracts explained that the usable areas of their houses or apartments should be within one percent of the contracted space, Li said. Howev-

er, by turning over homes with usable spaces three percent larger than contracted, developers could charge tens of thousands of yuan more from customers.

Another common complaint was that community organi-

zations or property managers charged residents fees for services never provided and people had nowhere to turn in because the inept organizations had exclusive service rights.

“Unlike telecommunications equipment, not every family is able to buy their own house,” Li noted. “But the rate of complaints about real estate is very high, it is a really dangerous trend that related authorities should be paying attention to.”

In the insurance field, most people complained that it was much harder to get compensation than they had expected when they signed for their insurance policies.

Earlier this month, the China Consumers’ Association revealed 10 common unfair items on insurance contracts, mostly in the automobile and personal insurance areas, including: “in cases of accidents, when the insured is not responsible, the insurer should first ask for compensation from the guilty party, and then ask for compensation from the insurer”; “if the insurer cannot locate the guilty party in an accident, the insurance company can reduce compensation by at most 50%”; and “if a medical insurance policy holder stays in the hospital more than 15 days, he or she should let the insurance company know beforehand.”

## Monopolies to blame

The clear and resounding answer on why so many unfair terms were floating around the market, given by 81% of respondents, was industry monopolies.

“Many industries and services, such as telecommunications, banking and railway transportation, are hold-overs from the planned economy and no one can compete with them or challenge their authority,” Li said. “They are the ‘players’, ‘rule makers’ and ‘referees’ at the same time. Therefore, they have overwhelming advantages over consumers and vested interest in harming consumers’ interests to further their own.”

The survey indicates that many people are concerned about monopolies over more than their own frustrations. The majority of respondents, a solid 86%, said such monopolies would make Chinese industries less competitive on the

international market and harm the growth of the Chinese economy, especially since the country has entered the World Trade Organization. Some 22% said they thought imbalances in information resources were the roots of unfair company policies.

Adding to the trouble, Li noted, was many consumers’ unfamiliarity with new products such as financial services, real estate contracts and insurance policies. Because there was no way for consumers to truly grasp the specifics of such complex matters, it was easy for service providers to prey on their ignorance, he said.

The fact that some (16%) of consumers felt they had no means of protecting their rights only encouraged violation, Li said, adding it was not fair to blame people for such feelings.

“Compared to product and service providers, consumers right now are at a real disadvantage,” he said. “The costs for them to protect their rights often exceed their losses from unfair terms.”

Even simple scams likely to be ignored by most consumers can turn into big money for companies. Telecom providers had millions of clients, so an unfair term that translated to several yuan of losses to consumers, a figure likely to be overlooked by individuals, represented millions of yuan in easy revenues for the companies.

Respondents said other factors behind the unfair terms problem were regional protectionism, a lack of self-discipline from companies, insufficient education of consumers, flawed laws and ineffective legal enforcement and execution.

## Grin and bear it?

“What would you do if you found you had suffered from unfair commercial terms?”

When asked this question, 51.2% of respondents said they would “just bear it to avoid trouble as much as possible,” 32% would not take any action, 33.4% would try to negotiate with service providers, 38.7% would refuse to sign contracts, 39.8% would complain to consumer rights groups, 22.7% would resort to the law and 42% would seek help from the media.

But do those methods work? Less than one percent of respondents said “my problems always get solved”, 3% said most of their problems related to unfair terms were solved, around 56% said they were “seldom solved,” and just under 40% said they were “never solved.”

“Though there are different levels of consumer organizations, there are not enough and consumers need more specific organizations to protect their rights, such as home owners committees,” Li told *Beijing Today*. However, according to him, most home owner representative organizations in China are voluntary, loose groups without legal rights, meaning they are incapable of really protecting people.

The only way to eradicate unfair terms, nearly 80% of respondents agreed, was to shatter the industry monopolies. In another question, 56% said punishments for unfair terms should be more severe.

For his part, Li called on the government and the domestic media to strengthen their roles as supervisors and protectors of the public good.

However, there seems to be little hope among the public that change is coming soon. When asked “do you think most unfair terms can be removed in a short period of time,” around six percent said yes, 20% said it was hard to tell, and the rest answered “no.”

## Survey Information:

The Social Survey Institution of China’s survey was based on information from 58,257 respondents across China, 76.52% of whom were from cities, 20.02% from towns and 3.46% from villages.

By Liu Zhaoxi

Slow to take off in some countries, text messaging by mobile phone has become almost a national obsession in China, with people across the country, particularly youth, rapidly typing out notes with their thumbs all times of day. Texting appears to have already become an important part of everyday communications for many people in China, a phenomenon supported by a nationwide survey of messengers released by Tegic Communications, a subsidiary of America Online and provider of predictive text input software.

Short messages, or SMS, were found to most popular among people aged 23 to 35, more than

## Texting as a Way of Life

half of whom said they sent an average of more than 20 messages a day.

Among regular users, texting has become an indispensable part of their social lives. Two-thirds of those interviewed said they had at least once used SMS to set up a date, though few had proposed marriage or broke up a relationship through short messages. The digital notes are even more popular for sending greetings and wishes, as around 90 percent of the people surveyed said they would send “happy New Year” messages to

family and friends.

Message sending has even found roles in the professional world, with 30 percent of respondents saying they regularly sent short messages to arrange appointments or meetings, over 25 percent said they used SMS to get answers to work-related questions and 22 percent said they messaged their bosses to ask for sick leave.

The survey was conducted by the China Centre for Information Industry Development (CCID) consulting, a research and consulting firm focused on



the mobile telecom industry. More than 3,000 people nationwide replied to the survey questionnaire, posted on the website

Sina.com, after which around 300 were interviewed by telephone to gather more detailed information.

By Dong Nan

Just over half of China’s population, or 53 percent, can speak the country’s official language, Mandarin, a survey released this week says. The investigation, which checked 470,000 people from 160,000 families around China with the exception of Hong Kong, Macao, and Taiwan, was conducted over six years by the State Working Committee of Chinese Language.

The coexistence and use of diverse dialects around the country are unique features of modern Chinese, Tong Lequan, head of the survey group, told *Beijing Today* on Tuesday.

Efforts to spread Mandarin, which used to be isolated to

## More Mandarin in China

Beijing and a few other areas of northern China, began only 50 years ago, he explained.

As the standard for communication in China, Mandarin was widely used as the communication medium for public activities, while people used dialects native to their areas or provinces when communicating within their families or with other local speakers, the survey found.

Some 66 percent of urban residents speak Mandarin, while the figure among rural people was 45 percent, it showed.

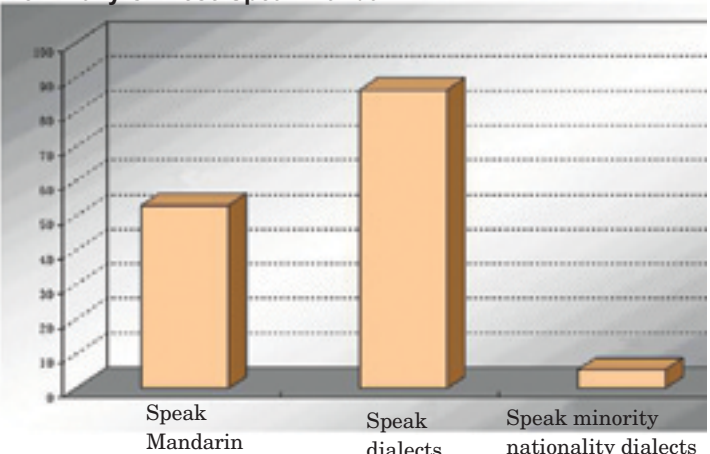
The survey also showed that

young people have better Mandarin skills, with 70 percent of people under 29 able to speak standard Chinese compared to 31 percent of people aged 60 to 69.

Among many Chinese, speaking Mandarin is perceived as a sign of good schooling, an idea backed up by findings that only 10 percent of illiterate people speak Mandarin, while 87 percent of college graduates can.

Tong said with the change of generations and the spread of education, Mandarin would gain more ground.

## How Many Chinese Speak Mandarin?



Respondents said the main difficulties with speaking Mandarin were not having situa-

tions to use the standard tongue (48.7 percent) and struggling to change accents (43.3 percent).



# Personal Power Treads on Justice

By Wang Fang / Duan Hongqing

A murder case that occurred 16 years ago in Tahe County, Heilongjiang Province, splashed back onto the front pages again when Han Guizhi, a high ranking official in the province, was dismissed from her post.

The original suspect in the case, Han Jianxun, Han Guizhi's son's brother-in-law, was arrested and put on trial on October 12, 2004. The court's decision is expected soon.

## The murder case

On May 30, 1988, a murder was reported in Tahe County, a small town with a population



Yang Zhenmian with his grandson Han Yang, who was killed with his mother, Yang Yongxia.

Yang Yongxia

of 100,000. Yang Yongxia, 24, the chief accountant of Tahe Tax Bureau, and her one-year-old son Han Yang were found dead in the cellar of her house in Daxing'anling Prefecture, Tahe County. The evidence seemed to point to her husband, Han Jianxun.

Han Jianxun, who was born in 1965, had married Yang Yongxia in 1986. But Yang Yongxia's neighbors told *Caijing Magazine* that the couple's relationship had soured after Han made his mother's maid pregnant.

The police at the level of Daxing'anling Prefecture and Tahe County set up a special team to investigate the case. On June 8, 1988, Han Jianxun was arrested. Han confessed that he killed his wife and son. In the meantime, the evidence collected from the murder scene all appeared to confirm Han's guilt.

However, just as everyone in Tahe County was assuming that Han would be punished by the law, the case was quietly shelved. Han stayed in Tahe prison where

he was allowed a fairly comfortable existence with occasional visits home and in 1994, he was bailed out and allowed to move to Qinhuangdao, Hebei Province to start a new life.

## Han Guizhi's connection

When *Caijing Magazine* was carrying out its investigation in early December in Tahe County, people kept on asking them, "Do you know Han Jianxun's background?"

Han Jianxun's mother, Liang Chunju, was the administrative executive of the Educated Youth Office in Tahe County Government as well as the manager of Tahe County Labor Company, holding the power to allocate the local labor force.

Besides having a powerful mother, Han Jianxun was also the brother-in-law of Han Guizhi's son, Chen Hongbo. In 1988 when the murder case was reported, Han Guizhi, who later became Chairwoman of the Heilongjiang Provincial People's Political Consultative Conference and deputy secretary of the

Heilongjiang Provincial People's Congress Committee, was the deputy director of Daxing'anling Forestry Administration Bureau in charge of personnel. Han Guizhi and Liang Chunju became friends and relatives by marriage.

"It was not surprising to see what happened after the arrest," a friend of the victim Yang Yongxia told *Caijing Magazine*.

Just as the murder case appeared close to its conclusion, the whole process was halted. First, Han Jianxun was transferred from Xinlin Prison to Tahe Prison and then he withdrew his confession. The Tahe police began to re-assess the crucial evidence in the case and the procuratorate threw out the case citing a lack of sufficient evidence.

Nothing more happened until 1993 when the parents of Yang Yongxia appealed to the local authorities. On December 27, 1993, Daxing'anling Prefecture Intermediate People's Court conducted an open hearing into the case.

A local resident who participated in the hearing told *Caijing Magazine*, "From the evidence shown in the court, it was difficult to reach the conclusion that Han Jianxun was guilty."

Again, things proceeded in an unexpected direction. After the hearing, there was no decision issued by the court. At this time, Han Jianxun's distinguished relative, Han Guizhi, was promoted to standing deputy of Heilongjiang Provincial Department of Personnel.

On August 4, 1994, Han Jianxun was bailed out by the secretary of the Party Committee of Tahe County. Soon after, when

Liang Chunju was promoted to director of Daxing'anling Prefecture Sanatorium in Qinhuangdao, Han Jianxun was allowed to move there with her.

In the following years, Han Guizhi was promoted quickly, becoming the director of the Provincial Department of Personnel and, in 1997, deputy secretary of the Heilongjiang Provincial People's Congress Committee. Han Guizhi was also in charge of local political and legal issues, giving her power over the local police.

Meanwhile, Han Jianxun started his life in Qinhuangdao. He married again and had a son. He also became the deputy manager of a local real estate company.

## 16 years of appealing

The parents of the victim Yang Yongxia have spent the last 16 years appealing to various authorities.

Yang Zhenmian, 70, father of Yang Yongxia, told *Caijing Magazine*, "We tried to look for help from the media but none of them wanted to reveal the truth."

When the media returned to the murder case following Han's arrest, Yang Yongxia's relatives didn't want to talk to them. One told *Beijing Today* on Wednesday on the phone, "We do not want to talk to the media now. We are waiting for the court's decision."

"I spent most of my time in the last 16 years appealing to the upper government authorities until my hair turned gray," Yang Zhenmian said calmly.

Yang told *Caijing Magazine* that Yang Yongxia was his second daughter, obedient and sweet. When she was murdered, her mother, Chen Xiuzhi was so terribly upset that she almost went mad. "She would be sad for a couple of days whenever we mentioned the case," Yang added.

Now Yang has got severe rheumatoid arthritis. He cannot stretch or bend either his knees or arms. During the long process of his appeals and travels as far as Beijing to find people to hear his case, a lack of funds meant that he often had to sleep outside, under bridges or in subways. "What I've got back from 16 years of appealing is this condition," Yang said.

Yang and Chen told *Caijing Magazine* that Han Jianxun's mother, Liang Chunju, had kept on calling them to stop appealing and promising to give them money if they agreed. But Yang and his wife refused because they believed in "a life for a life."

## Still waiting for justice

On April 8, 2004, when officers from the provincial Disciplinary Committee came to Tahe County and called to ask for their support in reopening the case, they initially refused since they did not know that Han Guizhi had been removed from power. They were told by the officers that in February 2004, Han Guizhi had been removed from office and placed in a government program designed to get corrupt officials to confess their misdeeds.

On March 18 this year, Han Jianxun was arrested in Qinhuangdao. Several days later, his mother, Liang Chunju was arrested for covering the case up and offering bribes in the process.

The officers from the provincial Disciplinary Committee told Yang Zhenmian, "It is high time the murderer was punished."

On October 12, 2004, the murder case of Yang Yongxia and her son was heard again in Harbin People's Intermediate Court. Han Jianxun, now 39 years old, was put back in the dock.

Han Jianxun's lawyer pleaded that Han was not guilty since a lot of direct evidence, such as a lethal weapon, had been lost over the past 16 years. The trial was facing the problem of a lack of sufficient evidence.

The plaintiffs, Yang Zhenmian and Chen Guizhi, have claimed 1,518,377 yuan in compensation from Han Jianxun, for Yang Yongxia's death, the fees they spent during the appeal and their medical expenses.

Two months have passed since the trial opened but the court has not yet reached a verdict. One of Yang Yongxia's relatives asked *Beijing Today*, "Will Han Jianxun be sentenced to death this time?"

"We tried to look for help from the media but none of them wanted to reveal the truth."  
—Yang Zhenmian, 70, father of Yang Yongxia, told *Caijing Magazine*.

Photo by Zhang Xiaozhong

By Zhou Ying / Cao Yunwu

Seventy six officials from various departments in Henan Province were divided into 38 assistance teams and deputed on February 18 this year to go and live in 38 villages severely affected by HIV/AIDS in Shangcai County for one year.

"They will live in these villages and be neighbors of HIV/AIDS sufferers," Zhang Shuxin, a division director of the General Official of the Henan provincial government told *Nanfang Weekend* in February.

According to Zhang, the key task of the officials was to ensure that all the construction projects funded by the provincial budget were completed by the end of May 2005.

The province has allocated 64.85 million yuan for the projects, including asphalt roads, drinking water facilities, schools, standardized clinics and an orphanage for each village.

Moreover, they were required to offer free medicine for HIV carriers, free and anonymous HIV tests for villagers, free education for orphans of HIV/AIDS victims, free pre-natal treatment of infected pregnant women, and to take care of elderly people who have lost children to AIDS.

According to an article on June 30 on China.org website, a total of 11,844 people have been confirmed HIV-positive in Henan — about 14 per cent of the total in China — most of whom were infected through illegal blood transfusions.

Now ten months have passed by. Henan government has decided to extend the task from one year to three years, Chen Ruijun, one of the 76 officials told *Nanfang Weekend* last week.

In an interview with *Nanfang Weekend*, Chen talked about his experiences during his time in an AIDS village.

## Gaining trust

The moment Chen Ruijun set foot in Wenlou village in Shangcai County, a small village where more than 65 percent of residents have caught AIDS from selling blood, he began to explain to the curious villagers: "From now on, I am an ordinary villager in Wenlou village."



A family on their way to the village clinic

However, the villagers did not understand and did not trust him at all. In order to fulfill the construction projects in the village, Chen needed to talk with the villagers and ask their advice, but most of them showed an indifferent attitude.

Yu Wenfu, one of the villagers, told Chen one day that he and the other locals had seen enough cadres before, and were more concerned about what Chen was going to do rather than what he was saying.

According to Chen, the first tough issue that he had to confront since he arrived at the village was the project of moving the village clinic.

"Wenlou village actually consists of six areas: Wenlou, Gaozhuang, Hanzhuang, Luozhuang, Zhang and Polou. And all the residents from the six areas share only one clinic. Our assistance team decided to move the clinic to the south of the Wenlou area in order that patients from the other parts could get easy access to treatment," Chen added.

However, more than 20 residents from the Wenlou area gathered in front of the village committee after hearing about the decision, requiring them to build the clinic within the Wenlou



Free medicine was made available to the HIV carriers.



A patient receiving treatment in a village clinic

area. And the next day hundreds of people assembled in front of the gate of Chen's home again, asking him what the patients were to do if the clinic was moved far from their village.

Finally the assistance team made a concession to the Wenlou residents, and the clinic now is located at the entrance of the

village, even though this means it's still quite far from the other five areas.

"Our concession was meant to show the villagers that we were there to help them. We just wanted them to trust us," Chen added. Chen recalled that more and more residents started to cooperate with the assistance team after that.

## Blocking supply hoarding

Officials in the village told Chen that many of the villagers felt a sense of hopelessness because of the incurable disease, and that locally there used to be a lot of robberies and other crimes. One thing Chen discovered was that a number of people claimed to be AIDS sufferers in order to get free medicine.

According to *Nanfang Weekend*, 730 residents from Wenlou Village had been allocated AIDS medical treatment cards, enabling them to get easy access to aid and free medicine. However, Chen discovered in May that many healthy people were using these cards to get the medicine and then sell it to people in other villages.

Some doctors from village clinics told Chen that some villagers demanded as much medicine as they wanted, and the doctors dared not decline.

Under the bed of villager Cheng Sifa, Chen found many boxes of various kinds of medicines, and Cheng confessed that he did not even know how to take them. "I just feel safe to see so much medicine in my home," he admitted.

Chen organized for all the villagers to have physical examinations, and the results showed that only 410 were real HIV carriers. He then nullified the old cards and issued new ones.

Hundreds of people who did not get the cards came to Chen's office afterwards, cursing him and even spitting in his face. But Chen refused to submit to the intimidation. He also announced that the patients were only allowed to get two days dosage of medicine each time in order to prevent waste.

Chen did not choose to compromise with the villagers this time, and the cost of medical treatment in Wenlou village has been reduced from 10,000 yuan to 3,000 yuan per month. "We saved the money for the real patients, and the villagers never call names after receiving the real profits," Chen said smilingly.

## Leaving the village

On August 28, after he had been working in the village for six months, the health department of Henan Province informed Chen that he was to come back and work in the department and that Liu Xuezhou, deputy chairman of the provincial health department, would take his place in the village.

What satisfied Chen was that nearly all the residents in Wenlou village who once distrusted him surrounded the village committee again on the day of his departure, asking him to stay and continue working in the village.

Chen said that he had no other choice but to lie to them and say that he was going back home to see a doctor. "I did not even dare to take any baggage with me," Chen recalled.

According to Chen, there were actually many officials who refused to live with villagers in the first several months of the program. Therefore Henan government launched a series of measures to punish those officials.



From 1998 to 2003, Golden Key Project helped 2,154 blind and sight-impaired students go to mainstream schools in Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, and 1,024 in Inner Mongolia.

# Rays of Hope



Xu with the UNESCO Comenius Medal



Xu at work



Xu Bailun and his wife Ji Yaqin

Photos by Xiang Li



Xu Bailun and Li Xuesong, a blind child, 10, from Inner Mongolia

By Wang Fang

**L**eaning on the bed in his ward in Beijing Zhongguancun Hospital, Xu Bailun, 74, the initiator of Golden Key Center of Education for the Visually Impaired, told *Beijing Today*, "Don't worry about me. I rode on a horse when I was 70 and went skiing when I was 72. I must get this operation to be able to go back to Shaanxi."

Xu needs to get back to Shaanxi because it's one of the locations where he's set up his Golden Key project to help blind children go to school. The last time he visited the province in April 2004, he suffered severe pain in his left knee, which impaired his ability to travel even more than the blindness which struck him down when he was 42.

"But this time, I am not despairing as I did when I lost my sight in the 1970s. I have my Golden Key Project, my *Ode to Joy* magazine, thousands of blind children who need my help and friends all over the world. Most important, I have my beloved wife, Yaqin, who has been supporting me for the past 20 years. I am lucky," Xu said, holding his wife's hand on his chest.

His doctor told *Beijing Today* that he had never seen a blind person who was so confident and optimistic. "I didn't even realize he was blind until he asked his wife to sign for him."

#### A light in the dark

When the darkness fell upon Xu Bailun, he was only 42 years old, working as an architect with Beijing Architecture Design Institute. "It was a medical accident," Xu sighed, with an air of resignation.

Being blind was difficult. He found that small things, like dressing, washing and moving around had become almost impossible to do by himself. And to compound his misfortune, Xu's wife, Zhu Yitao, passed away in 1984.

"When people came to visit me, they would say, 'Take a rest.' I felt that I was not needed by society any longer," Xu said, "But this is not what I wanted to hear. I wanted to be useful to others." In his autobiography, he wrote about himself at that time like a "ghost haunted in the daytime without hope or responsibilities." To him, the only work was to survive and grow old.

In May 1985, Xu was asked by his father to stay with him in Shanghai for a while. He heard that Shanghai School for the Blind was famous for teaching blind children, so he went there to see if he could help. Yang Meiyang, the headmaster of the School warmly welcomed him and told him that blind students were badly in need of Braille reading materials. "She suggested that I could write some articles for her blind children. I hadn't felt that trust for years."

Xu soon came back to Beijing and began editing the Braille magazine *Ode to Joy* in December 1985. It is still the only Braille magazine for blind children in China.

In 1987, Liu Shuang, 15, from Liaocheng, Shandong Province sent a letter to Xu, along with her savings of about 10 yuan. In her letter, she told Xu about her little blind brother who had drowned after falling into a pond on the way to school to try to listen to the lesson from outside the classroom. She said, "He was only 8 years old when he died. I hope my money can help some other blind children have a chance to go to school."

Xu showed *Beijing Today* Liu Shuang's letter, a piece of yellowish paper. "I started to think about starting an education project for the blind children," Xu believed that as a blind person himself, he knew what the blind children needed. "I am connected with the blind children heart and soul," he added.

#### The Golden Key Project

According to the statistics from the national census in 1987, there were about 130,000 blind children (aged 7 to 15) in China. "Most blind and sight-impaired children in the city can go to schools for the blind, but for those who live in rural areas, staying at home is their only option. They need help to get to school," Xu said.

He named his education project "Golden Key", hoping that it could bring happiness and hope to blind children in rural areas.

"The education we advocate is inclusive education," Xu said. "It means that blind and sight-impaired students should go to mainstream schools and study with other children."

This is a change in Chinese special needs education. Before that, going to special needs schools was the only option for blind students.

According to Xu, the special needs education in China is not very fair for the blind. "They study in the school for the blind, and then work in the factory for the blind. Throughout their lives, they barely have any contact with other people, let alone get back into mainstream society," Xu said with a sigh.

In 1998, the Golden Key Project began in Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region. With help from the local government and China Disabled Persons' Federation, all together 2,154 blind and sight-impaired students were able to go to normal schools.

The success in Guangxi encouraged Xu to popularize his Golden Key Project in other areas and this time he decided to apply for funds from international organizations. "The funds granted by the government for special needs education are limited. I thought if I could apply for some funds from other sources, more students could benefit from my project."

In 1999, Xu's Golden Key Project in Inner Mongolia was ready

to start, funded by the Christophel Blindenmission (CBM), Evangelischer Entwicklungsdienst (EED), Hildesheimer Blindenmission (HBM) and the Dark and Light Foundation.

During Xu's interview with *Beijing Today*, a blind boy named Wang Jianfeng, 14, called. "I heard from my teacher that uncle Xu was sick, so I called to tell him that we miss him and hope he can recover soon."

Wang told *Beijing Today* that he still remembered the days when he was unable to go to school. "Everyday in the morning, I stood behind my home gate, hearing other children passing by on their way to school, talking and laughing so happily. How envious I was! How eagerly I wanted to join them!"

With the help of the Golden Key Project, Wang was accepted by a nearby school in 2002. Although blind, he studied with his peers in a regular class. The only difference was that his books were printed in Braille.

"I am going to get another two full marks in Chinese and Maths examinations at the end of this term as a present to uncle Xu. I miss him a lot."

Xu said in a gentle voice, "I know, I know. My good boy, I'll take you riding when my leg is recovered."

From 1999 to 2003, Golden Key Project helped 1,024 blind and sight-impaired students go to mainstream schools in Inner Mongolia.

When Xu was about to start his Golden Key Project in Shaanxi Province last year, he was notified that only HBM could grant a small proportion of the funds needed for the project.

73-year-old Xu had to look for new fund resources again. With the help of his friends, in October 2003, Boeing China gave US\$100,000 to the Golden Key Shaanxi Project, which will enable about 40 vision-impaired children in six counties in Xianyang region in Shaanxi Province to go to school.

"We are facing the difficulty of lacking sufficient funds. But we will help every blind and sight-impaired child that we can," Xu said.

"In fact, I have some good news to tell you," Xu told *Beijing Today*. "In September, I received a letter from Tang Qian, the director in charge of UNESCO special needs education affairs. In the letter, he said that the Golden Key Project was a good example for implementing inclusive education. He hopes that sometime in May next year, a conference of inclusive education for countries and regions in the East and Southeast Asia will be held in Inner Mongolia to promote the Golden Key model."

#### My wife Yaqin

"When I started to initiate the Golden Key Project, I knew life would not be easy. During those difficult times, my wife, Yaqin has always been at my side, encouraging me and supporting

me," Xu said.

"I came to Xu's life when he had lost everything; wife, work and sight," Yaqin said.

"I still remember the time when he stayed in Tongren Hospital for his eyes in the middle of the 1980s. It was a Sunday and the relatives of the other patients were talking and laughing in the ward. But Xu was alone, listening to the radio in a corner. I felt sorry for him," Yaqin said.

From then on, Yaqin started to visit Xu, bringing him fruit and telling him stories. Love gradually began between the two. However, when Xu asked Yaqin to marry him, Yaqin hesitated.

"I am 25 years younger than him. What will he leave me at the end of the day? It will be long-time loneliness."

One Summer's day when Yaqin brought food to Xu's home, she found he was lying in bed with a high fever. "He had gone out looking for help to run *Ode to Joy* and a sudden afternoon rain had come down. No one noticed him, a blind old man. I cried out and I decided no matter how hard my life would be, I would marry this man," Yaqin said. The couple got married in September 1996.

Good news followed. One month later, Xu was awarded the UNESCO Comenius Medal, which recognises achievements and innovations in education. Xu was the first Chinese person to win this award and he suddenly became famous and the media started to visit his office in En Ji Li Compound, Beijing.

Yaqin is usually absent from the media photos of Xu, preferring to stay in the background. People who have worked with Yaqin describe her as "Iron Woman". She was aware of the nickname. "Somehow people are afraid of me since I always require my co-workers to work hard. I tell them what we do is education, not only charity."

But Iron Woman also had her weak moments. "When I first prepared the wheelchair for Xu, a bitterness I'd never known suddenly bit me," Yaqin told *Beijing Today*. She said, "When Xu sat on the wheelchair, I found my right arm was no longer held by him. My life suddenly lost its center of gravity." Yaqin had to take up some of Xu's responsibilities. "I was not used to working without him, but I have to since Xu had promised those blind children."

Despite suffering from high blood pressure, Yaqin went to Shaanxi in November to carry out the screening of the vision-impaired children. "I really worried a lot about her. You know, in those poor villages, they often do not have a stove. How could she endure the cold nights?" Xu told *Beijing Today* when Yaqin walked out to arrange the operation with the doctor.

"But she did not complain at all," Xu added. "She is God's gift to me."



# Contemporary Art on the Rise

By Sabu Zhang

The stated aim of Beijing Art Now Gallery (BANG) is to “encourage artists to become a part of world art history,” while “keeping Chinese contemporary art in China.”

Opening on September 15, the gallery is now staging its third exhibition, titled Shadow Shaped, a collection of paintings by He Sen.

Located opposite gate 12 of Beijing Workers’ Stadium, the gallery, overlooks a small lake with drooping willows in summer and snowy surface in winter. The exhibition space covers an area of 230 square meters, and includes an exhibition line of 61 meters. The walls are specially designed to utilize natural light to illuminate the paintings.

The gallery chose Yang Shaobin’s solo exhibition Post 9/11 for its opening exhibition, highlighting the gallery’s attitude and the artist’s concerns about modern warfare and the future of humanity. The large scale images, featuring tanks crashing into houses, airplanes, and angry faces, are sometimes clear, sometimes ambiguous, in battlefield blue, green and red, full of wreckage and victims.

Yang’s earlier works, red-colored oil paintings showing men’s terrifyingly painful expressions, covered with sticky, oozing blood sprays and explosions, seemed overwhelming in their pain and violence, both physically and psychologically. The artist’s intense fascination with violence, both a protest and an accusation, is clear. Yang’s passionate yet academically inspired work aroused enthusiastic support for the gallery and set the tone for the future development of the gallery. His solo exhibition provoked an immediate response and become a hot topic around



Stare, Luo Yi

Beijing’s art scene.

The gallery’s second show, Stone Face, was a big hit and a huge commercial success. Opening on November 3, it featured works by seventeen renowned avant-garde artists – Deng Jianjin, Fang Lijun, Liu Ye, Lu Hao, Song Yonghong, Song Yongping, Su Xinpeng, Sun Liang, Wang Guangyi, Xie Nanxing, Yang Shaobin, Ye Yongqing, Yue Minjun, Zeng Fanzhi, Zeng Hao, Zhan Wang and Zhang Xiaogang. Wang Guangyi, known for his “Great Criticism” series, combines fashion brands and the propaganda of the Cultural Revolution to create what he terms “Political Pop.” Fang Lijun showed xylographs featuring his well-known “Bold Man” and Zhang Xiaogang showed his “Big Family” lithographs. Three prints by Liu Ye were undoubtedly the most popular, all selling in the first week.

The Stone Face exhibition, gathering together some of the top representatives of Chinese contemporary art, seems to have revitalized the form of

printmaking. Exhibition curator Huang Liaoyuan pointed out, “All these artists are prestigious ones, that’s why their works have commercial value.” Art works become consumables along with the growing ability of consumers. Collectors need not be professionals, the purchaser merely considers how well the painting would match the decor of their home. Anyway, the prints are not so expensive as other authentic works.

The just-opened He Sen solo exhibition, titled Shadow Shaped presents a series of paintings featuring fragile-looking girls smoking, some holding toys in their hands.

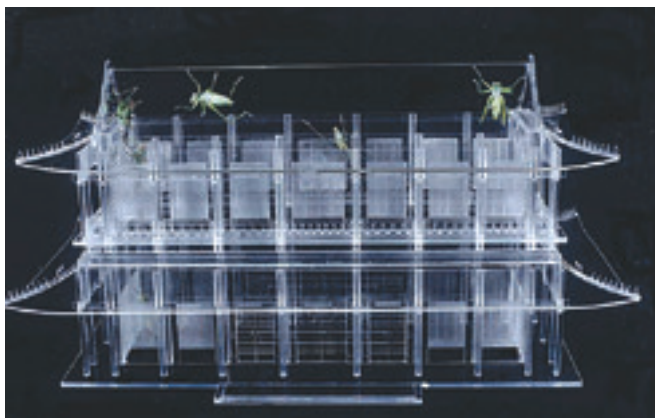
The works create a sense of unearthliness. Set before an empty background, the subjects inhale or exhale smoke, light a cigarette or hold it burning between their fingers. Blue-gray smoke rises quietly, reflecting the inner vacancy of the new generation. At the same time, the stuffed toys enrich the image, embodying the immaturity, hopelessness and insecurity of the young women.

Huang Liaoyuan remarked in a review the subjects look “sensitive and melancholy; dissolute and lonely. Youth is seemingly beautiful, yet an ultimately cruel experience, consisting of

enthusiasm and endless imagination, but vacuous (or impulsive), and lacking in reality. Youth is not a time to do things, but a time to be wasted.” Most of the works at the show were created after 2002, when He Sen’s “girls” opened their eyes, while before that, he was known for his “Eyeless Girls” series. From 1998, he adopted a kind of gentle and hazy “flashlight” technique instead of his earlier “knife” style. Inspired by the eyeless stone sculpture and the blurred eyes in a flashlight, his eyeless girls on sofa look terrified and uncertain. It is like they are not yet awakening, still in the mist of adolescent innocence, whereas his current works symbolize the grown up girls turning into complex, material women.

“What is depicted is the fear of growing up and the desire to escape from reality,” is how He Sen describes his own work. “However which of his works is not expressive of a desire to be grown up and an appeal to reality?” Huang Liaoyuan comments, “He Sen’s paintings are sentimental, they are expressions of endless longings for tragedy and compliance with destiny, they reveal feelings of helplessness and depression in the face of reality. This low tone and ambiguous style is still rare in contemporary Chinese art,” the significance is, “He introduced the concept of ‘emptiness’ to contemporary Chinese art.”

With close ties to an international network of curators, art critics, and artists’ representatives, Beijing Art Now Gallery believes that it can introduce contemporary art into the homes of ordinary people, while at the same time bring such works onto the stage of the international art scene. While the domestic and foreign market for these artists’ works is rapidly expanding, in 2005, BANG plans to participate in a series of important exhibitions in China and abroad. It will also represent artists at biennials, international art fairs, and other major exhibitions around the world.



Insect pot, plexiglass, crickets, Lu Hao

## Out with the Old, In with the Avant Garde

By Gareth George

Close the box on Santa and spray snow. Put the rubber-necked tourists blocking the streets to the back of your mind. Time to thaw your brain ready for another year. Check thoughts at the door if you don’t want them provoked – it’s Beijing Contemporary’s new winter show.

This promises to be a much shorter run than the gallery opener, which had been in place for the last three months. Featuring four of the big guns of China’s contemporary art scene, as well as a gifted newcomer – Shi Jing, who comes direct from an exhibition titled Is it art? – the winter show seems likely to further enhance the gallery’s reputation for showcasing the most challenging and exciting art in China today.

Shi Jing paints huge canvases all in white, before scratching into the surface paint to reveal an image, some water splashing onto the ground for example. His painting has an ethereal beauty in its many shades of blankness, and the image changes for the viewer from different angles. And while talking of toying with perceptions, if this is an intended theme of the show, they have recruited the acknowledged master in art scene stalwart Ma Liuming.

Ma Liuming is a long time friend of the gallery and its big sister in London, having been involved with their first show eight years ago. Famous for taking the traditional concept of Yin and Yang as opposite and equal but separate and (metaphorically) tearing it to shreds, the long haired one has shelved his female alter ego (at least for the time being) and turned his imagination to the recent birth of his child. The work is oil on canvas – a significant departure for the normally performance focused artist, and there will be five paintings on show – all for the first time, having been completed in the last three months. Any appetites as yet un-whetted may be interested to hear that the pictures are a kind of self-portraiture from the perspective of his child in its first few days of life.

Those who remember the elegant swimming pool sized installation from the gallery opening will be happy to welcome back Lu Hao. He will show two delicate and highly detailed plexiglass sculptures from a series of four depicting famous Chinese monuments, like the Mao Mausoleum and the Great Hall of the People. Shown for the first time at the 1999 Venice Biennale, the sculptures had contained expiring grasshoppers, birds, fish



Box of American Gold, plastic briefcase and porcelain, Xu Yihui



AK-47(28), acrylic on vinyl, Zhang Dali

and flowers. In their original state, the sculptures didn’t allow a lot of air in and the animals passed away rapidly. Chinese Contemporary, perhaps catering to a more squeamish breed of art lover, have chosen to go without the living elements of the work, while still allowing Beijing’s creative set to muse on the work as it was intended. Illustrations and lithographs will show the pieces as they were, nestling alongside the sculptures themselves.

Xu Yihui, who is best known for his ceramic Little Red Books installation, will continue to show pieces from his Gaudy Art collection. His dramatically painted porcelain and plastic *Box of American Gold* (1999) and *Flowers and American Money* (2001) will sit alongside another piece, all rich in Yihui’s favoured symbols of commercialization and peasant life.

Rounding out the line up are five paintings by Zhang Dali, another old friend of the Chinese Contemporary. His edgy and provocative AK47 series is based on the newly emerging class of migrant workers in Beijing, and visitors will be able to see AK45 (2004) an acrylic on vinyl piece, among others. Dali chose the AK47, a Russian assault rifle, as his symbol because of its associations with violence, aggression and foreign-ness. With this appropriately sledgehammer approximation of the daily lives of these workers in mind, Zhang Dali creates his paintings by repeating the name ‘AK47’ over and over again. The AK47 is also the most common small arm in the world, a fact Dali plays on as Beijing changes and modernizes and the migrant worker becomes ever more ubiquitous, ever more invisible.



Photos by Sabu Zhang



## What's New

By Tom Spearman

CD  
The Darkness: Permission to Land

Music isn't as quick as DVD in Beijing, and albums often emerge here a year or so after their release back in the West. For instance, *Permission to Land* came out in July 2003 but was first spotted by this reviewer in Beijing last week. This delay can occasionally be an advantage, allowing you to size up an album and hear some of it on the radio or Internet before shelling out the readies, a necessary caution with The Darkness. Initially, they sounded like one of the worst ideas in years: a stereotype of the kind of metal band that died out around 20 years ago, and pumped up with enough swagger, wailing vocals and skin-tight leopardskin outfits to seem more like a pantomime than a real band. People weren't sure if it was all just a joke. But since then, you heard the singles on the radio and realized that, joke or not, this band rocks and they've got the tunes. They've even become well known for their jubilant, hard-rock cover version of *Street Spirit*, one of Radiohead's most miserable songs. That's not included here, sadly, but the album is pure airguitar joy nonetheless.

DVD  
Bagdad Café

This is one of those movies with "unlikely" written all over it that turns out to be a gem. German tourist Marianne Sagebrecht finds herself stranded in the Californian desert after a bust-up with her husband and turns up looking for a room at an idiosyncratic truckstop establishment named Bagdad Café, whose proprietress has also just bid good riddance to her loser husband. An improbable relationship develops between the two and the film builds into a character study of rare warmth, subtlety and humor. The café is also home to various other quirky characters including Jack Palance, who provides a memorable turn as a former Hollywood set designer who takes a shine to the new German boarder. Not to be confused with the later Whoopi Goldberg TV show based on the movie.

## The Hudsucker Proxy



An unfairly overlooked slice of Coen brothers heaven, *The Hudsucker Proxy* is one of the best comedies they've made. It's loosely based on *Mr Deeds Goes to Town*, by Frank Capra, and includes numerous other tributes to vintage Hollywood movies. Native out-of-towner Norville Barnes (Tim Robbins) is given a top job by corporate schemer Sydney J. Musburger (Paul Newman, in one of his most unlikely and enjoyable roles) in order to facilitate a takeover. The plan goes awry when Norville turns out to be less of an imbecile than everyone imagined. Meanwhile, covering Norville's rise and sniffing out Sydney's plan is undercover reporter Amy Archer (Jennifer Jason Leigh).



Tang Can (as Xue) and Jacky Cheung (as Lang)

Photo by Cui Jun

## Howling into Beijing

By Jacqueline Yu

After seven years wait, Hong Kong pop singer Jacky Cheung's musical *Snow Wolf Lake* finally came to Beijing, its Mandarin version performed in the Capital Stadium on Christmas Eve with a 2005 tour around China and the world to follow. If you are a Cheung fan, seeing it will make you love him more; if you are not, it was still good fun for Christmas, a season that young people in China look on as a romantic time for lovers.

This version of *Snow Wolf Lake* is a revival of the Cantonese 1997 version. As early as 1996, when he finished his 100th tour concert, Cheung asked himself whether he could make a change. The idea of *Snow Wolf Lake* occurred to him, so he went to New York to study musicals. The production of

his own musical in Hong Kong took him another six months, and finally took to the stage in Hong Kong on March 27, 1997. It caused a sensation and following 42 shows, it went on tour to Singapore.

It is purely a love legend, without anything related to the real world. The story centers on the female character Xue (meaning Snow), who is loved by two men, rich Zhi and poor Lang (Lang meaning Wolf). Lang, meanwhile, is loved both by Xue and her older sister Feng. Ill fortune conspires to keep the lovers Xue and Lang apart, but finally they are brought together forever, with the death of Xue and Lang accompanying her into the next life.

*Snow Wolf Lake* has two sides, one like a musical and one like

a concert. In some big scenes, like the family ball, it's a musical mixing singing, dancing and acting. But in the other small scenes, where there were only one or two actors on stage, singing without much acting, it's more like a Jacky Cheung concert. Even though Cheung was playing the part of Lang, the audience still called out his name when he sang. Two other famous singers, Tang Can (as Xue) and Chen Jieyi (as Feng) also performed.

Though Cheung said he'd prefer it if the media focused on the story rather than his decision to cast Tang Can as Xue, she was still the focus. Tang, well known in the mainland as a folksong singer, was a surprise choice for the part. She lost some weight to become the slim and tender Xue,

and changed her singing method to a more popular style. She looked lovely in her red dress, but her voice received mixed reviews, in contrast with the splendid deep tones of Singapore's Chen Jieyi, the actress and singer playing Feng, and who had been acting this character in the Cantonese version since 1997. Tang's dancing, though she had worked hard on it, also left room for improvement. Still, her second act performance, requiring more mature and tragic values, was great. Meanwhile, Cheung's acting, though he has been on the big screen for a very long time and is considered a good actor, looked a little strained on the stage, and weaker than his singing.

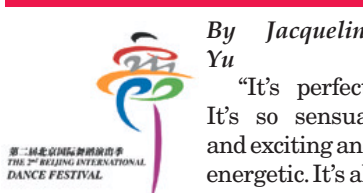
Besides the three famous names, there was another shin-

ing star on the stage. Yu Yi, a young actor who graduated in 2001 from the Shanghai Academy of Drama, played Zhi, the rich young suitor to Xue. Yu made Zhi seem more reasonable than previous actors in the role. And his voice and dancing was more than competent.

Since its first performance seven years ago, Cheung has shortened the show from three hours to two and a half; with high-tech aids, they now don't need as much time to change from set to set. Due to the size of the stage in the Capital Stadium, an orchestra of 30 musicians could be hidden higher behind the stage, appearing at the end.

Fans can still catch one last show in Beijing on January 1, 2005.

## All about Sex



Sabrina Matthews of her role as Carmen in the new version of the gypsy melodrama presented by Canadian dance company Alberta Ballet. The company, currently on its third tour of China, is participating in the second Beijing International Dance Festival, and has brought three dance works to the stage: *Carmen*, choreographed by artistic director Jean Grand-Maitre; Margie Gillis' *Rivers Without Bridges*; and Edmund Stripe's *Unquiet Light*, all performed at Tianqiao Theatre from December 23 to 27.

Not realizing there would be two works before *Carmen*, most audience members became impatient and curious ("Is this *Carmen*?") during the first half of the performance. In the winter of 2004, Canadian contemporary dance legend Margie Gillis crafted the poignant *Rivers Without Bridges*, a structured but largely improvised piece. Using the uplifting arias of George Frederic Handel, *Rivers Without Bridges* is an exuberant display of joy, skill and intricacy. Dancers in light rainbow-colored costumes danced across stage in groups, pas de deux, pas de trios or solo, giving the impression of a shining river of dancing water drops. Award-winning choreographer and the company's ballet master, Edmund Stripe contributes *Unquiet Light*. Set to Tchaikovsky's choral Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom, this ethereal pas de trio featured two male dancers and a ballerina.

After the interval, familiar Span-

Sabrina Matthews (as Carmen) and Kelley McKinlay (as Don Jose)  
Photo By Tian Yufeng

ish-style music began. The set was very simple, just with a plastic curtain representing the gate of a camp, a bar and various other imagined buildings. But there was also a flashy backdrop and later a projection screen to liven up the set. Against the simple backdrop, Jean Grand-Maitre's neo-classical choreography for *Carmen*, with its generous touch of Spanish flavor, provided plenty of physical challenges for Sabrina Matthews (as Carmen) and Kelley McKinlay (as Don Jose), along with impressive stage fighting for the more exciting moments.

This modern telling of *Carmen*'s story – a fiery Spanish Gypsy who spurns her obsessive soldier lover for a flashy bullfighter, all-leading to an explosive ending – deals with love, passion, jealousy and murder. It's much more complex and murky than traditional fairy tale ballet where

ballerinas have to smile and be pretty and elegant.

"She's very rough and very rugged. She knows what she likes, she knows what she wants and she knows how to get it. She's bitter about living in a man's world, but she also realizes how to use her talents to get where she wants to go," said Matthews, who tried to bring out the passion of her character.

The dance combines selected arias from Rodion Shchedrin's *Carmen Suite*, arias from Bizet's opera performed live by soprano Linda Faye Miller, and video created by Kenneth Doren. The images projected featured footage of actual bullfights and close-ups of the principal characters in the story. The brutality in the ring is contrasted with the beauty of *Carmen*'s eyes or of a single rose. It's a spectacular staging intended to reinforce the action and offer an insight into the characters – particularly *Carmen*.

## Have a Punkin' Christmas!

By Wang Yue

Nameless Highland Bar has been holding a lot of live rock 'n' roll gigs recently, including country rock, punk, hip-hop, metal and alternative music acts. The venue also held a special Christmas Eve Rock show last week.

The well-known bands on stage were: Bo Lan Tong Hua, Second Hand Rose, Hang on the Box, CMCB, Happy Avenue and Mai Mai Jiang. Bo Lan Tong Hua is like a Brit-pop band, with handsome players but unexceptional music. Hang on the Box is the most famous female punk band around at the moment. Their music swung and the lyrics were easy and simple English. But the Chinese girls kept speaking English after the songs ended which angered some audience members. The girls actually wanted to give out some live info, that famous Swedish band The International Noise Conspiracy will perform on January 7 at Yu Gong Yi Shan club. Happy Avenue is famous for its female vocalist Wu Hongfei, who earned a masters degree at Tsinghua University. But their songs are too weird and awful. And Wu Hongfei got her timing wrong.

In the middle of the performance, the bar held some games with the audience, but after that it was back to the music. CMCB, a hip-hop band, or maybe "hip-pop", can always make you happy. Second Hand Rose combine Chinese traditional opera and rock 'n' roll. Mai Mai Jiang, who played Weiwu'er music, are from Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region. Their music is very expressive and unrestrained.

It's good to see that we still have some punkers in Beijing, guys who hate school and hang around every day



Photo by Wang Yue

but always find ways to express themselves.

There was also a live punk show on Christmas day in CD Cafe, with several bands and the website "punkzone" taking part in it. It was like a kind of friends' party where the visitors all knew each other. Everyone was wearing the coolest clothing, so this reviewer looked a little out of place in an ordinary heavy coat.

The live show began at the unorthodox hour of 1 pm. This partly explained the lack of any great ambience, despite the large gathering of fans. The acts on stage included Believers, UNSAFE, Comic Roxy, Easygoing, Infect, Live for Drinking and Hophead. About ten bands performed, but most of them were not outstanding. It seems that these teenagers are mainly eager to stand on the stage and have no time to write a complex song. But punk is about energy and the teenagers certainly have that.

The styles of music ranged from hardcore and old school to "new school". In between songs the guys did quite a bit of talking which showed their teen spirit. And the crowd got into it as the music turned noisy and hard. Near the end, the best band, Believers, appeared on the stage. The vocalist even climbed to the second floor and jumped off. It was the highpoint of the show.



Talking Jobs and Corporate Culture:

# Intel: High Demand for English

CPU maker Intel has seen rapid development in China in recent years. Some 1,000 new employees have been recruited in the past two years, and the demand for employees will remain as high for the next decade, according to Chen Yinqi, Intel China's recruitment manager, in her online chat with students on December 16 at www.54club.com.

During the chat, Chen answered questions about positions and requirements for recruitment in 2005.

Nearly three hundred graduates are needed in the coming year, especially master's and doctor's with majors in computer science, microelectronics, electronic engineering, mechanical electronics, accounting, human resources and MBAs.

## Interview skills:

**Q: What is the interview process in Intel? What abilities do interviewers want to know when we face them?**

**Chen:** Not every department has the paper-based tests, but usually three rounds of interview are required. We conduct the interviews through what we call a behavior test, which means the candidates give the examples of their former experiences or stories in order to show whether they have the ability we want.

**Q: What are the requirements for master's graduates? Which one has the advantages, the master's without working experience, or bachelor's with?**

**Chen:** We consider related experience as added value but



Chen Yinqi, Intel China's recruitment manager

Courtesy by sina.com

not a must for those graduates. The requirements for students with master's degrees are higher than those with bachelor degrees. For instance, we will ask some deeper questions on the knowledge and technique aspects. Also demonstration of problem solving ability is very attractive and persuasive to interviewers.

## High demand for English:

**Q: I know from what you have introduced earlier that English is a must in Intel. What is your standard for language proficiency?**

**Chen:** Intel has high evaluation on the language aspect when selecting professionals, because English is firmly connected with their jobs. It's not only the office language for the senior managers who have online meetings with colleagues around the world every week, but also the communication tool for engineers in the factories of different countries, such as Malaysia, Philippines and Costa Rica.



Intel launched its Centrino at Time Square, New York

Courtesy by myhard.com

In addition, our headquarters is in the US, and the laboratory researchers often need to report new results to colleagues there. Therefore, English is required for diverse levels of employees.

**Q: I have my College English Test (CET) 4 and 6. Do these certificates meet the company's requirements?**

**Chen:** Certificates are one aspect when we evaluate candi-

dates' language proficiency, but we focus more on their conversational skill. We know that many students have great capability in tests, but we believe that practice makes perfect.

**Q: What positions are suitable for English majors?**

**Chen:** The major of the applicant is considered when job vacancies arise and we hope that two sides can properly

match. Nowadays, the English students need to occupy some know-how of other fields; otherwise, the posts of secretaries or assistants are opening for pure English majors.

## Training opportunity:

**Q: If I am hired by Intel, what kind of training can I get?**

**Chen:** Every new employee will have a training plan designed by themselves and directors within the first six months after they join the company. Various courses are provided at our Intel University, and the directors will arrange them to take the courses online or by the lectures that can make them improve the professional skills. After the six months, we have the individual developing assessment, which conduct every year to help them develop based on their interests and abilities.

**Q: Can the newcomers get training abroad?**

**Chen:** Absolutely yes. The opportunity of going abroad is related to the position, and no matter he or she is a senior one or a newcomer.

## Internship opportunity:

**Q: As for the students in campus, do we have the opportunity to do internships with Intel?**

**Chen:** Yes, we consider the internship program as the professional pool for the development of the company. The students can work in our software laboratory or factories during the summer vacation.

(Edited by Xie Lixue)

## Situations Vacant

The Southern Industrial Zone, Bincheng District, Binzhou, Shandong Province, is looking for two reps and five consultants in Beijing. Annual salaries range between 25,000 and 50,000 yuan.

Major business is to attract investors to the industrial zone.

Please contact: Mr. Chen at 13561569235

Jinzhou Yinbo Foreign Languages & Computer School is looking for teachers of foreign languages and computers. Please send your resume and photo to:

Yinbo Foreign Languages & Computer School, Ziyan Hotel, Jinzhou, Hebei 052260  
Tel: 0311-316000  
Website: www.inhb.com

Webmasters wanted. Familiarity with the Internet, web page design and music composition software essential. Love of music useful. Contact Mr. Hu at: 6333-1671 ext. 8006.

A cultural media company wants to hire a foreigner for international business.

Requirements: male, British, long time in Beijing, love Chinese culture, stable, honest. Legal experience an advantage.

Contact: sun198052@yahoo.com.cn

## Seeking Employment

Chen Yurong, PhD in consumer psychology and master's of economics, has been a house-keeper, reporter, editor, economic researcher, market analyst and promoter. Currently, I am the general manager's assistant at Zhejiang-based Zhengbei (Pearl) Co. Ltd. and manager for development planning at Beijing Zhenbei Sci & Tech Co. Ltd. I'm looking for a better job.

Please visit my personal website: www.chenyurong.com

Or call me at: 6707 4612, 13651033853

Email: cyr@chenyurong.com, cyr@zhenbeijr.com

An enthusiastic girl, confident in her future, is looking for a job related to English. Good at English listening, speaking, reading and writing.

Please contact Miss Xie at: 6237 3739, 13114513646

E-mail: Flora2@sina.com

## Job Services

Immigrating to Canada? Study, business visit, corporate registration, patent and trademark registration, and legal litigation in Canada? Document translation in English? Please contact:

Add: 7100 Woodbine Ave. Suite 110, Markham, ON. L3R 5J2 Canada

Tel: 001-905-415-1728/92

Fax: 001-905-415-1750

Email: canadaimmcn@yahoo.ca

Website: www.mkgi.com

Help you to change your visa (f, x, z, j) and apply for a green card.

Tel: 8659 2919

E-mail: alen678@163.com

(You are welcome to send positions offered and wanted info to: ayi@ynet.com. Beijing Today does not take any responsibility for the accuracy and authenticity of the information published in this column.)

**A Beijing-based English newspaper is looking for reporters, freelancers and editors.**

**Chinese applicants should have university degrees in English or related majors and media experience.**

**Foreigners from the UK and US with relevant media experience preferred.**

**Please send your resumes and writing samples to: hr@ynet.com**

## Shenzhen Leads Country in Salaries

Demand highest for holders of master's and PhD degrees

By Zhao Hongyi

Shenzhen held its position of offering China's highest average salary in 2004, a survey by zhaopin.com released on Monday revealed.

The average monthly wage in the city is 4,109, up from 3,987 in 2003. Second place in the salary ranking went to Beijing, with a monthly average of 3,764, followed closely by Shanghai where monthly pay averages 3,650.

The results of the web-based job hunting service's survey were based on the results of two million replies from all over the country.

Though many MBA holders still command high salaries, their value appears declining. Average monthly payment dropped to 7,709 yuan from 8,343 yuan in 2003. The pay of technical professionals fell even more sharply, to 2,613 yuan a month from 2,980 yuan.

One thing the survey clearly indicated is that higher education pays off. The average monthly salary of people with master's degrees bumped up to 5,288 yuan this year from 4,272, while that of doctoral degree holders hit 5,932 from 4,499. Holders

of bachelor's degrees saw a similar raise, moving up to 3,569 yuan from 3,100 yuan in 2003.

But that does not mean news is good for newcomers to the job market, particularly recent university graduates, whose average monthly salary dropped to 1,591 yuan from 1,645 yuan last year. And the record 2.8 million new graduates set to flood into the labor market in 2005 can expect to earn even less.

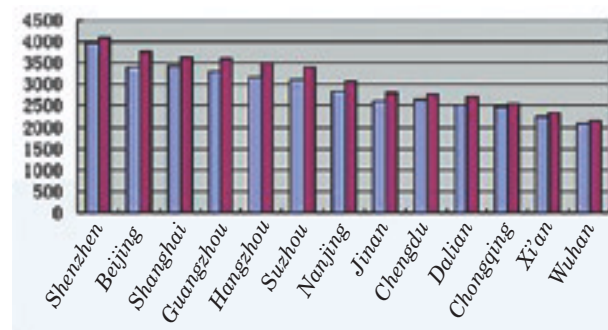
Foreign invested enterprises remain the top targets of most job-seekers, in part because of the good, rising pay, which reached an average of 3,820 yuan this year, up from 3,277 yuan.

The domestic private enterprises rank second, rising from 2,714 yuan to 2,916 yuan.

Coming in third were state-owned enterprises, where pay also rose to 2,789 yuan from 2,343 yuan. The 19 percent rise, the highest of all the four types of employees, indicates that such companies are likely to draw more top talent in the future.

And in fourth, or last, place for monthly payment was the government, though average pay still increased in 2004 to 2,552 yuan from 2,341 yuan.

## Average Salaries in Chinese Cities, 2003 vs. 2004



Source: zhaopin.com



McDonald's joined the price-cutting competition earlier this year, reducing the prices of its major menu items. The fast-food chain has announced a rapid expansion in China, which will provide opportunities to new graduates.

Photo by Wang Zhenlong

## Campus Recruitment Tour:

# Catch Up with Hamburger University

By Xie Lixue

Yunnan University was the closing location of the 2005 campus recruitment tour of McDonald's China, which previously traveled to Tsinghua University, Beijing University, Fudan University, Nanjing University and Guangzhou's Sun Yat-sen University.

Jonathan Shih, general manager of Beijing McDonald's Food and Rita Chan, senior director of human resources at McDonald's China Development, introduced the company's development, training programs and recruitment plan for new graduates.

McDonald's has grown quickly in China and now operates over 600 restaurants nationwide with more than 43,000 employees.

"We offer more than just jobs, we offer careers," Chan said.

"We always make training our priority. More than 80,000 managers have graduated from our internal schools, called 'Hamburger Universities,' since 1961."

"McDonald's is a people compa-

ny serving hamburgers. We want all staff to have the experience of working on the front line and communicating face-to-face with customers.

As a result, the first and most important step for all would-be employees is to work in one of our restaurants, making hamburgers, selling food or cleaning tables."

In their second year, trainees receive overseas training and then they are given projects, which marks the start of their full-time work for the company.

Applications are being accepted online at resume.bj@mcd.com.hk. The interview process ends this month, and formal job offers will be sent by January 31.

**Question: How many graduates will you hire this time? What was the situation last year?**

**Rita Chan:** It's hard to give a concrete number. Usually, in Beijing, we recruit 10 people to be probationary managers every month.

Last year, we received more than 4,000 resumes from university students and finally ended up hiring four recent graduates.

**Q: Aside from resumes, what kind of information should applicants provide? When will people hired start work?**

**RC:** It's best if you send your university transcript, copies of your diploma and other certificates and awards, along with your CV in order to give us a more complete picture. Candidates who are given jobs will start work in September 2005.

**Q: I will complete my MBA next year and have some social and work experience. Do I have any advantages in looking for a job at McDonald's?**

**RC:** Because the starting point for every candidate is to work in our restaurants, we hope to recruit professionals with strong educational backgrounds as long as they are willing to start out at the same level as people with different backgrounds.



# 'Temple Fair' Celebrates Study, Books

By Ayi

For centuries, temple fairs have been traditional public events in China around festival holidays drawing people of all walks of life. They also used to be one of the rare events that farmers could take the time from their toil in the fields to attend.

Ditan Park, once a site of imperial worship and sacrifice and more recently the place for Beijing's most popular Spring Festival temple fair, is also the

location for a less traditional kind of folk festival – a massive book fair that draws all kinds of Beijingers hoping to get good reading at even better prices.

This year, for the first time, the fair is providing a dynamic platform for the city's young people to think about their career futures, personal beliefs and roads in life, as the municipal communist youth league committee is hosting dozens of events under the Beijing Youth

Study Festival.

The events include the awarding of Top 10 Outstanding Beijing Youths, Top 10 Excellent Young Enterprises and Top 10 Creative Youths, and Family and Young People days, meant to bring families together and demonstrate to them the important role family plays in young people's development through free lectures and fun events. The selection of Beijing's Top 10 Young Volunteers

will also be launched and donation drives are being held to collect books and computers to distribute to children in poor, remote villages on the outskirts of Beijing and to young people in prison.

*Beijing Today* has published this page to provide a clear picture of the two-week festival and invite readers to participate and get a real glimpse of the dynamism of this ancient city's young generation.

## Snapshots:



One corner of the Ditan Book Fair has been specially devoted to books on lifestyles, Communism and basic information about China.

Photo by Zhang Nan

## Awards Mark Start of Festival

By Zhang Nan

Mark Rowswell, a 39-year-old Canadian man, was named one of the Top 10 Outstanding Beijing Youths together with nine native Chinese on December 23 at a ceremony held in Guo'an Theater. The ceremony marked the opening of the Beijing Youth Study Festival, running through January 4 in concurrence with the traditional winter book fair at Ditan Park.

The same day, members of the municipal communist league committee also awarded Beijing's Top 10 Excellent Young Enterprises and Top 10 Creative Youths.

The aim of the awards, said Guan Chenhua, secretary of the China Communist Youth League Beijing Committee, the organizer of the study festival, was to encourage young people to de-

velop themselves by praising those who have been successful and recognizing people from outside Beijing who have made great contributions to the capital.

Mark Rowswell, better known by his Chinese name *Dashan*, is the first foreigner to ever have won such a prize. For years, Rowswell has been a star in China for his excellent Chinese and ability to perform traditional Chinese cross-talk. Now he runs his own business, focusing on promoting English teaching and cultural exchange.

The list of the Top 10 Outstanding Beijing Youths also included Zhang Yining, gold medalist in women's table tennis singles at the Athens Olympics, and Xu Tao, vice-director and editor of Beijing Television's scientific and educational program center.

The Top 10 Excellent Young Enterprises awards went to successful business pioneers, particularly those in high-tech sectors and trade, while the Top 10 Creative Youths prize was designed specifically for people from other parts of China, often referred to as migrant workers, who have made great contributions to Beijing's progress and development.

Huge billboards set up around Ditan Park show pictures of the winners in all categories as well their full resumes for public inspection. Event organizers have also set up a pavilion at the fair displaying and selling books related to healthy beliefs and lifestyles and the Communist Youth League, the history and development of which are vividly depicted on other billboards around the venue.



Mark Rowswell, aka Dashan, won a Top 10 Youth prize along with nine Chinese. Dashan has spent nearly a decade in China, learning Chinese, teaching English and hosting TV programs.

Photo by Ayi

## Learning Fun for Whole Family

By Zhang Nan

Education is a life-long process, and to teach civic duties, first aid and other practical knowledge to people of all ages, Family and Young People days were run last weekend during the Beijing Youth Study Festival at Fangzhetan in Ditan Park.

The general theme of the proceedings was "let knowledge guide life."

### Drawing display

One of the highlights was a show of many fantastic drawings by children. Each artistic creation had a clear topic, from protecting children to the dangers of "harmful information" to the importance of family harmony.

Posters put up next to the drawings told children and their parents the importance of civility in society and instructed them on how to act civilized in their daily lives.

### Topic lectures

Professionals from many fields were invited to deliver free lectures with the intention of passing on useful knowledge. One of the most popular was a lecture by doctors from Beijing's 304 Hospital that introduced basic first aid. After the lecture, one elderly woman said she thought the talk was very helpful and provided plenty of practical information on how to deal with minor injuries and accidents.

Other fun, educational events for the whole family at the Beijing Youth Study Festival have included games, legal and psychological consultation and speeches.

The family study campaign will continue through communal drawing activities with the theme of environmental protection. Organizers hope these and other activities will give every member of every participating family the chance to learn, communicate with each other and have fun.



## Atlas of Wishes

*Beijing Youth Daily* has set out a huge map of China at Fangzhetan in the Ditan Park and is inviting people to write wishes for the New Year and paste them on whichever of

China's 31 provinces, municipalities and autonomous regions they choose.

People can write and paste their wishes in person at Ditan Park or call 6590 2161 (9 am-5

pm), email xinyuan@ynet.com or send a short message to 9638 (ChinaMobile) or 9608 (ChinaUnicom) to have someone post their wishes in their places.

Photos by Cui Jun



## Paths to Success

By Xie Lixue

A series of photographs displayed around paths at Fangzhetan in Ditan Park depict and celebrate the latest technological inventions and other creations of Beijing's young people.

The photo show is one of several activities during the Beijing Youth Study Festival organized to encourage young people to make progress, develop their careers, realize their potential and take the lead in the business world.

Young people made up the bulk of the audiences at free lectures on such subjects as English training, computer skills and business management on December 29 and 30.

The festival's career development and career investment activities have also drawn hordes of energetic youth and provided a platform for them to ask questions of experts from the National Development and Reform Commission, Industrial and Commercial Bureau, State Intellectual Property Office and major domestic banks.

Moreover, some reputed English training firms, such as Wall Street English, New Oriental School and Dell English, will be on hand until the festival closes on January 3 to provide information on studying abroad and financial professionals will offer free money management advice.

## Gifts of Hope

By Xie Lixue

Despite the cold temperatures, Ditan Park has become a center of warm feelings, with people donating books and computers to needy kids, including orphans, juvenile delinquents and students in remote, rural areas of Beijing municipality. Cash is of course also welcome at the donation centers at the park's southern and western gates.

Some prominent companies are getting into the giving spirit. Hailong Group, an IT firm, donated money to the national Hope Project to set up computerized classrooms in poor villages. And the Zhongnanhai Fund, a charity supporting students from poor families to continue their studies, has also made a significant contribution.

On Sunday, Beijing Television will organize program hosts and hostesses to offer autographs to anyone that donates even one book or buys a copy of *Mude*, a book looking back on the first 10 years of the Hope Project written by famed local TV host Zhao Pu. All proceeds from book sales will go towards the project.

Books and computers collected in the donation drive will be distributed to new libraries aimed at needy students.

The other big event is the start of the selection process for the Top Ten Volunteers of Beijing 2004 awards, the results of which will be announced in March.

A hotline has been set up to provide door-to-door pick ups of book and computer donations at 6611 0001

Chinese calligraphy and painting are long-standing traditions at the Ditan Book Fair and have been enriched this year with new ideas to spark young people's interest in traditional Chinese arts and history.

Photo by Zhang Nan



The Family and Young People events provided lectures and exhibitions to teach children to do housework and optimize their studies.

Photo by Zhang Nan



The Ditan Book Fair, held twice a year in summer and winter, has been providing Beijingers with great books at rock-bottom prices for over two decades.

Photo by Ayi



On December 26, leaders of the municipal communist youth league committee kicked off a donation campaign for books and computers to be given to students in poor villages and young people in prison.

Photo by study.bjyouth.net



The Beijing Volunteers Association launched the Top 10 Volunteers selection campaign at the Beijing Youth Study Festival to encourage young people to give their time to others.

Photo by Ayi





Ho, ho, have a drink - Vincent Johnson shakes it up

Photo by Jia Ting

# Mix Master

By Annie Wei

Even with the destruction of south bar street in Sanlitun, Beijing basically abounds with bars, from simple watering holes to ritzy, upscale clubs. They vary greatly in price, vibe and quality, but one unfortunate fact is hard to argue - in most, the drinks stink.

To try to get a leg up on the competition on the cocktail quality front, the owner of the Bailing bar on Houhai recently invited experienced master of mixology Vincent Johnson to come and provide some concocting consulting.

Johnson, 61, a native of Ireland, did some of his work in a Santa suit, passing out plenty of good cheer in the form

of some of the best drinks in town during his brief week in Beijing. And he wasn't about to let the freezing weather slow him down.

"Beijing's winter is cold, but it's nothing like living two months in the dark and around 20 degrees below zero in Stockholm," he said.

The Swedish city is where Johnson now calls home as a restaurant consultant, after traveling the world as a top bartender in 15 cities, including nightlife epicenters like London and New York. He runs five restaurants in Stockholm, all of which are very successful, especially the Junkyard and Liver Room. A passion for food and drink must run in

the family, as his eldest son Joseph runs the ultra-upscale French restaurant Daniel, a Park Avenue, New York establishment that books out six months in advance.

But success has not gone to his head, and Johnson remains an easy-going, personable guy. Before leaving for his next local media meeting, he mixed up a couple special drinks. The first was bright pink orange topped with a cherry and orange, crisply sweet yet irresistible. Next came the even better, bittersweet concoction called "loneliness".

"The sour and sweet taste reminds a woman of her ex-loves: they are sweet, but do not last long," Johnson said.

"All the women in Stockholm like loneliness, especially on long winter nights."

And he even left a couple recipes for whipping up your own holiday cheer this New Year's.

## Loneliness

Mix half an ounce of orange juice, half an ounce of pineapple juice and half an ounce of coconut rum (like Malibu) together in a cocktail shaker and shake several times. Pour into a glass, top with a cherry and slice of orange.

## Mimosa special

Start with a tall champagne glass and fill half way with champagne. Fill in the remainder with two thirds orange juice, one third Cointreau.

- NEWLY OPENED -

## Lonely Hearts Club

By Zhou Ying

The holidays, and New Year's Eve in particular, can be a tough time to be single. For one thing, there is the inevitable question when the clock strikes midnight on January 1 - who to kiss?

To the rescue, whether it's on New Year Eve or anytime lonely singles are looking for love or friendship, comes the new Link Bar in the sprawling Jianwai Soho complex. Meeting people is the name of the game at Link, and to help people break the ice, it offers two tools - message cards and an electronic message wall.

The cute cards placed on every table have spaces for shy guys to write their name, age, hometown, telephone, career and other personal information. Then hand them directly to the person who's caught your eye, or the especially squeamish can pass them to waiters, who will take care of delivery. Bolder statements can be made by sending a short message to a fixed number, after which your words will be writ large across the bar's wall-sized screen.

Perched on the 26th floor



over Chang'an Avenue, the bar features a great view worth seeking by the already coupled or groups of friends looking for a new hot spot.

Things are going to really heat up in January, when Link hosts an online beauty contest, top prize in which is a VIP card worth 5,000 yuan. More information on the high-tech pageant is available on sina.com.

**Where:** Floor 26, Building A, Jianwai SOHO, 39 East Third Ring Road, Chaoyang

**Open:** 7 pm - 2 am

**Tel:** 5869 3088



Link has ways to help the shy, but is not about subtlety

Photos provided by Roger Luo

# Rivals No More?

By Joel Kirkhart

For years, Beijing and Shanghai have been fierce rivals in the running for the title of China's top metropolis. The conventional wisdom is Beijing has the culture, Shanghai the commerce, Beijing the history, Shanghai the cosmopolitan vibe.

With admittedly little reason, I have long resolutely stood on the Beijing side of the fence, a stake I figured must also apply to food. How good could Shanghai food really be considering the greasy, forgettable stuff pawned off as authentic fare at many local restaurants?

But one long weekend in Shanghai, with eating a top priority, was all it took to shatter such preconceived notions. In fact, after three days of dining in the city, I was basically ready to switch sides.

Our first night in town, my wife and I were determined to get real Shanghai-style fare, and after some painful wandering, ended up hopping a cab to Meilongzhen, a 60-year-old local institution that melds Sichuan and Shanghai cuisines with a striking interior and good service.

Shanghai cuisine was formed through mixing the cuisines of neighboring provinces and takes advantage of the many fresh ingredients of the Yangtze River delta. Meilongzhen then seamlessly fuses the city's culinary traditions with Sichuan classics to create distinct and fresh-tasting food.

One of the house specialties is a great spin on *ganbian bian-dou* (or dry-fried green beans), in which the precisely cooked beans, light-fried with minced pickled vegetables and garlic, had an appealingly sweet edge and pure



Hairy crabs failed to live up to their reputation at the Golden Anchor restaurant.

flavors. More native to Shanghai were the restaurant's *xiaolong-bao*, or steamed stuffed buns, the city's archetypal street food. We ordered two kinds, one with the standard pork and chive stuffing, the other with a hit of fragrant crab roe for a more complex, salty flavor, both of which were full of "soup", had admirably thin wrappers and were very tasty.

Small chunks of the bright orange roe also sparked up the restaurant's *hongshao xiefen shizitou*, a pork meatball braised in "red sauce" - usually a combination of Shanghai's favorite condiments, dark soy sauce and Shaoxing *huangjiu* (yellow rice wine). Eel is a big deal in Shanghai cooking and we got it in the form of slices of boned fillets that were battered, fried and coated in a rich, sweet dark brown sauce. The meal was nicely rounded out by a bottle of Shanghai-style *huangjiu*, called Shanghai *laojiu*, which is milder and thinner than

most Shaoxing versions and perfect with food when warmed.

Meilongzhen's main Longfeng room looks fit for a Qing emperor with its elaborately decorated ceiling and walls covered in paintings and a blazing gold dragon and phoenix relief. It's the kind of space that could command high prices, but much of the food is very reasonable, especially considering the quality.

Two nights later, a second venture into Shanghai cuisine came up far less successful. The Golden Anchor restaurant has an enviable location in Pudong, literally across the street from the 88-story Jinmao Tower, and claims to dish out very traditional Shanghai-style fare. If that means the kind of greasy, drowned-in-soy-sauce kind of food that many people don't like, fair enough.

Unfortunately, the Golden Anchor was the venue for our taste of one of Shanghai's most famous products, hairy crabs. These fresh-

## Weekend eating binge in Shanghai leaves Beijing looking bleak



It'll get you drooling - M on the Bund's impressive pavlova

Photos by Joel Kirkhart

water crabs literally grow hair on their claws in the autumn when they are in season, and are highly sought after. That heavy demand is apparently driving a thriving trade in cultivated, or "fake", hairy crabs, which must have been what we were served, considering the price. The crabs were served with strips of *niangao* rice pudding, but the sauce that swamped all of it was so soy-heavy and dominating that the crabs had no distinct flavor of their own, nor did they contain any of their coveted roe. Another bottle of Shanghai *laojiu*, this time infused with ginger strips, helped wash down the disappointment.

Whatever one's opinion of Shanghai food, there is sure to be something in the city to satisfy. Aside from a diverse range of Chinese cuisines, Shanghai has all the different kinds of international restaurants one would expect of a cosmopolitan city, from continental to Mexican and even Nep-

alese, as well as fun little finds like neighborhood bakeries that sell slices of good cheesecake for just 8 yuan and other treats.

Jean Georges is a relatively new French restaurant at the extremely trendy 3 on the Bund complex that has been generating lots of buzz and for its top-quality nouveau French cooking. Sens & Bund is a newer restaurant opened by two French brothers who founded a famed Michelin three-star restaurant in southern France. Another new place, Club Shanghai, is also reportedly helmed by a chef with a Michelin star to his name. With such heavyweights in Shanghai's line-up, Beijing's dining scene doesn't even seem in the same league.

For elegant Western food and great atmosphere, Shanghai's oldie-but-goodie is the storied restaurant M on the Bund, and one brunch at this institution more than explained its lasting popularity. One of the things that

makes M special, and successful, is that it does not aim to do more than it should. A fine example was the classic, no-frills Caesar salad, with crisp lettuce coated in a rich, addictive dressing (anchovies optional).

Mains included a tempting-sounding roll of suckling pig, but we had to watch in pained silence as the last serving was brought to some guy at the table next to us. Undaunted, we filed an order for kedgeree with smoked fish, a pleasant take on the Anglo-Indian rice dish in which the flavors of fish, curry, corn and cilantro were well balanced. The mixed grill was much heavier, a veritable meat fest crowned by one of the finest lamb chops I have ever eaten.

The eye-popper of the meal came at dessert in the form of the house favorite pavlova, a slice of thick baked meringue topped with a massive mound of whipping cream and sliced fresh fruit. Truth be told, it was too much to stomach in one serving, and the meringue was almost cloyingly sweet, but it sure looked impressive.

Top off the deal with a full French press of excellent coffee and starter cocktails and the M brunch, whether the 188 yuan two course or 218 yuan three course option, is a great deal. Especially considering the classy vibe in the smallish restaurant, which feels just right on the gloriously retro Bund with its Deco-inspired columns and bar. Take into account the restaurant's spectacular porch dining area, which offers unbeatable views north up the Bund and across the river at the glistening steel and glass of Pudong, and M becomes the kind of place Beijing can't really rival.



## Personal Classifieds

## Accommodation

A delightful apartment is now for lease. Located in Zhongguan-cun East Road No. 106, with one well furnished bedroom, a living room, a kitchen and a washroom, 47 square meters. It offers convenient transportation and an elite lifestyle. Contact: 6659 9489 (10:00-16:00) Email: silvia\_wang2002@yahoo.com.cn.

Two-bedroom apartment with one living room located near Guomao for lease. Well furnished and equipped, 3,500 yuan per month. Contact: 13911015178

Two-bedroom, one living room apartment located near Ritan Lu for lease. 2,500 yuan per month. Contact: 13717871041

## Language Exchange

A 20 year-old girl fluent in English is looking for a language exchange partner whose native language is either English or German. Contact: Prince5577@hotmail.com

Fred wants to improve his English, both oral and written. Now he is working in a newspaper. Contact: jhm816@sina.com; 6307 6490

## Professional Help

Tian Yingguo, a sales manager in Italy Benato with lots of experience in business, is looking for a job in related industry. Contact: 13121790355

Sha Nan, a German major graduate from Beijing Second Foreign Language College is now looking for a permanent job relating to Germany or finance. He has a passion for communication, teamwork and the Internet. Contact: 5837 5134, 13161078680, Email: ali401@163.com

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## Sport

## High Club – Horseback Riding

Learn to ride or hone your skills with well-trained bilingual instructors at a professional horse riding club.

**Where:** Meet at Big Easy, (south gate of Chaoyang Park) **When:** Sunday, 1:30 pm **Cost:** 330 yuan per person **Tel:** 6553 3920

## Performances

## Pipe Organ

American pipe organ player Ronald Ebrecht will perform, accompanied by the China Youth Symphony Orchestra under the conducting of Zhu Yibing. China has few pipe organ specialists, making this concert a rare opportunity to hear expert organ played on New Year's Eve.

**Where:** Forbidden City Concert Hall, in Zhongshan Park, Xicheng **When:** tonight, 7:30 pm **Admission:** 60-480 yuan **Tel:** 6559 8285

## Legend of the Great Archer by Hong Kong Ballet Troupe

To celebrate the Hong Kong Ballet's 25th anniversary, artistic director Stephen Jefferies has created a powerful new ballet – *Legend of the Great Archer* – inspired by a classic Chinese folk tale. The story of Yi, the Archer God, sent to Earth to help the Emperor extinguish the many suns scorching his land, is a broad framework for the ballet's underlying tangle of emotions.

**Where:** Poly Theatre, 14 Dongzhimen Nandajie, Dongcheng **When:** Saturday and Sunday, 7:30 pm **Admission:** 180-880 yuan **Tel:** 6500 1188 ext. 5126

## Patriotic Songs

Cheng Zhi, Dong Wenhua and Wang Xiufen, along with 200 other vocal artists from the Zhongzheng Song and the Dance Ensemble will perform a concert entitled "Long Live China!" led by conductor Zheng Jian.

**Where:** Great Hall of the People, west of Tian'anmen Square

## Exhibitions



## Group Show at Qin Gallery

Five famous Chinese artists, Luan Xiaojie, Pang Yongjie, Luo Qi, Feng Feng and Li Qiang, display their latest oil paintings.

**Where:** Qin Gallery, 1-1 E, Huaweili, Enjoy Paradise, Chaoyang **When:** January 1-31, daily 9:30 am – 5 pm **Admission:** free **Tel:** 8779 0461

## New Wave

China Art Seasons presents New Wave, a group exhibition featuring 14 artists – the next



generation making waves in the emerging Chinese contemporary art movement. Each armed with a distinct style, these new artists are expected to become some of the big names in the future of China's art scene.

**Where:** China Art Seasons Gallery, 2 Jiuxianqiao Lu, Chaoyang **When:** until February 5, daily 11 am – 7 pm (closed Mondays) **Admission:** free **Tel:** 6431 1900

## Jiang Zhixin Solo Exhibition

Born in Gansu Province in northwest China, Jiang has distinguished himself as a rugged painter specializing in depicting landscapes and abstract paintings with traces of western influence. This show exhibits Jiang's latest works, a

series of tributes to his western home.

**Where:** Treasure Art Museum, Wangfu Apartment Club, Beiqijiazhen, Changping **When:** until January 5, daily 10 am – 5 pm **Admission:** 30 yuan **Tel:** 8178 4081



## Group Show at Red Gate

The winter group exhibition at the Red Gate Gallery will feature paintings, prints and sculptures by artists including Zhou Jirong, Tan Ping, Wang Yuping, Shen Ling and Su Xinpeng, who touch on different aspects of life and people's places

in modern society.

**Where:** Red Gate Gallery, Dongbianmen Watchtower, Chongwen **When:** January 1 – February 28, daily 10 am – 5 pm **Admission:** free **Tel:** 6512 2561



## Preview for Guangzhou Art Expo

The Artist Village Gallery has chosen some works depicting the Songzhuang community to send to the Guangzhou Art Expo.

**Where:** Songzhuang Gallery, 1 North Renzhuang, Tongzhou **When:** January 1-31, daily 9 am – midnight (by appointment only) **Admission:** 15 yuan **Tel:** 6959 8343



## Swedish Noise

Founded in 1998, the Swedish band (International) Noise Conspiracy is by no means a typical pop or rock group. The (International) Noise Conspiracy is a political rock band that has ambition to be politically correct or

keep their ideas underground. The band doesn't fit into any frames or genres that makes rock music today so sterile and easy to define and therefore harmless. They will bring their "noise" to Beijing next weekend.

**Where:** Yugong Yishan Bar, 1 Gongti Beilu, Chaoyang **When:** January 7, 8:30 pm **Admission:** 50 yuan **Tel:** 6415 0687

## Jams

## Bar Blu New Years

DJs Dan, Kirk and Dover spin holiday beats while plasma screens show clocks turn all over the world. Rock in 2005 British-style.

**Where:** Bar Blu, 4/F Tongli Studios, Sanlitun Beilu, Chaoyang **When:** tonight, 9 pm **Admission:** 50 yuan **Tel:** 6416 7567

## Last Chance of Youth

Last Chance of Youth might be the only real hardcore punk outfit in the city. Check out their music and then chat them up on their politics after the show.

**Where:** What? Bar, 72 Beichangjie, Xicheng **When:** tonight, 9 pm **Admission:** 20 yuan (includes one draft beer) **Tel:** 13910209249

## Hot New Year's Eve Party at Vibes

DJs Fang Fang (Beijing's best female DJ), Tony, Markus and Vincent will deliver hot sonic waves and VJ spaceeskimo will bathe you in stunning visuals.

**Where:** Vibes Bar, 4 Jiuxianqiao Lu (inside 798 Factory), Chaoyang **When:** tonight, 9:30 pm **Admission:** free **Tel:** 6437 8082

## New Club

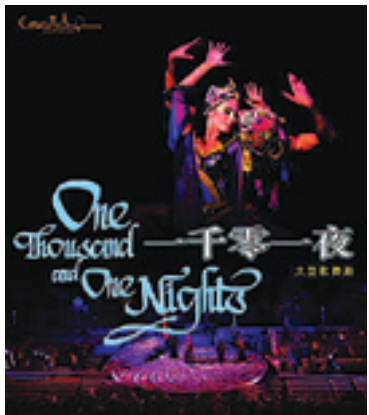
Music Box club is Beijing's first place to combine a bar, music and karaoke under one roof. DJs spin lots of hip-hop and R&B and break beat and trance parties are scheduled for the winter.

**Where:** No. 1 Dingfuzhang Nanli, Chaoyang **Tel:** 6575 7048

**When:** Sunday, 7:30 pm **Admission:** 100-1,200 yuan **Tel:** 8407 1331

## Musical Arabian Nights by Caracalla

Lebanon's Caracalla dance troupe will perform three local shows of the *Arabian Nights*, a dramatic show that incorporates



native Arabian dance with modern ballet. This troupe has performed for top audiences around the world.

**Where:** Beijing Exhibition Hall Theater, 135 Xizhimen Dajie, Xicheng **When:** January 2-4,

7:30 pm **Admission:** 180-1,680 yuan **Tel:** 6417 7845



## Brazil Samba Dance Show

A troupe of 35 samba dancers from Brazil will take the stage in a dance-fest sure to heat up this frozen city.

**Where:** Bei Theatre, Bejingmasi Lane, Jiaodaokou, Dongcheng **When:** tonight and tomorrow, 7:30 pm **Admission:** 120-680 yuan **Tel:** 6406 0175

## Grand Dance Play – A Dream of Red Mansions

Cao Xueqin's classic novel A

*Dream of Red Mansions* will be performed as a dance drama choreographed by Zhao Ming. The dancers come from the Zhanyou Song and Dance Ensemble of Beijing and the Shanghai City Dance Company. The celebrated novel, written during the late Qing Dynasty (1644-1911), will be presented in a modern way – with versatile body language and brilliant staging and props.

**Where:** Poly Theatre, 14 Dongzhimen Nandajie, Dongcheng **When:** January 7-9, 7:30 pm **Admission:** 180-1,000 yuan **Tel:** 6500 1188 ext. 5126



## Look Ahead to the Bejart Ballet

Beijing has been selected as one of the two cities in the world-famous Bejart Ballet company's

2005 China Tour. Many may remember their wonderful debut performance in the city in 2001.

This time, organized by the Beijing New Music Entertainment Company, the Bejart will present four masterpieces for Beijing's enjoyment.

**Where:** Poly Theatre, 14 Dongzhimennan Dajie, Dongcheng **When:** February 25-26 **Admission:** 180-1,280 yuan **Tel:** 6551 8181

## Folk Songs

Original folk singers, who are actually villagers and shepherds rather than performing artists, will display the beauty of real folk songs from over 20 ethnic groups in China. There are over a dozen type of folk song genres, which include those from Tibet, Inner Mongolia, and songs from Zhuang, Yao and Yi ethnic groups.

**Where:** Bei Theatre, Beibingmasi Lane, Jiaodaokou, Dongcheng **When:** tonight through Sunday, 7:30 pm **Admission:** 100-180 yuan (30 yuan for students) **Tel:** 6406 0175

## Music



## Wakin Chau and Jonathan Lee Together Again

Jonathan Lee has said he and Wakin Chau would sing for three days straight if they covered all their songs during their shared New Year's show in Beijing, a trip back into quality pop from the past.

**Where:** Workers' Gymnasium, Sanlitun, Chaoyang **When:** Tonight and Saturday, 7:30 pm **Admission:** 280-2,005 yuan **Tel:** 6417 7845

## Sanbao Solo Concert

Composer and songwriter Sanbao, who has made huge contributions to Chinese pop, takes the stage himself.

**Where:** Poly Theatre, 14 Dongzhimen Nandajie, Dongcheng **When:** tonight, 7:30 pm **Admission:** 100-1,600 yuan **Tel:** 6500 1188 ext. 5126

## TV and Radio Highlights

HBO

31 Friday

The Matrix Reloaded 9 pm

1 Saturday

Legend of the Seven Seas 9 pm

2 Sunday

Trapped 10 pm

3 Monday

Solo 9 pm

4 Tuesday

The Net 8 pm

5 Wednesday

SuperMan 2 10:30 pm

6 Thursday

Short Circuit 11:15 pm

CCTV-9

Monday – Friday

Around China 6:30 am

Culture Express 8:30 am

Nature and Science /

Chinese Civilization 11:30 am

Culture Express 2:30 pm

Nature and Science /

Chinese Civilization 5:30 pm

Dialogue 7:30 pm

News Updates /

Asia Today 8 pm

Sports Scene 11:15 pm

Saturday

Travelogue 9:30 am

Center Stage 11:30 am

Sunday

Sports Weekend 10 am

Documentary 10:30 am

This Week 12:30 am

China Radio International 91.5 FM

Monday – Friday

Easy FM Afternoon 2-7 pm

Fun in Beijing 5-5:30 pm

Joy FM 9:05-11 pm

Saturday

Music Memories 8:05-11 am

Euro Hit 40 12:05-1 pm

Musique Sans Frontières 6:05-8 pm

Joy FM 9:05-11 pm

Sunday

Music Memories 8:05-11 am

Jazz Beat 6:05-8 pm

Joy FM 9:05-11 pm

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By Zhang Jianzhong



Today, people of 141 different surnames call Nianbadu home, 13 dialects are spoken by the town's 3,600 residents, and folkways and customs from all over China are practiced, amazing and enchanting visitors from far and near.

By Peng Juan

Hemmed in by the undulating Xianxia Mountain Range, Nianbadu is an extraordinary town of old cobbled lanes and streets, shops with decorated wooden facades, palaces, temples and colorful murals.

This scenic town is a large scale architectural complex of remarkably intact Ming and Qing dynasty buildings. Once the strategic gateway of the bordering area of the three provinces of Zhejiang, Fujian and Jiangxi, Nianbadu, literally the Twenty-eighth Town, has been dubbed by scholars as "a dream left in the mountains."

#### One ancient path and two passes

Ages-old, strategically situated, once a formidable military stronghold and thriving trade route, the Xianxia Pass Scenic Area has a history of over a thousand years. The Xianxia Ancient Path together with the Xianxia Pass and the Fengling Pass has long been famed for their strategic significance.

The zigzag ancient path snakes its way up and down the precipitous Xianxia Mountain Range. More than 1,100 years ago, the famed general Huang Chao opened up the only path to Fujian Province through the lofty and precipitous peaks.

Since then, the path and the two passes were heavily fortified, becoming an impregnable area of military contention in Southeast China. Known as "The First Gateway of Southwest Zhejiang Province," the Fengling Pass ranks as one of the top ten national ancient passes.

When capped in snow, the Xianxia Mountain Range looks like a cluster of immaculate pearls. The archway becomes buckled with white armor, and the trees nearby blossom with flowers of snow. Enveloped in spotless white, the area takes on a solemn and majestic atmosphere.



*Delicate wood sculpture work above a doorway*

Photos by Way



# A Dream in the Mountains



In the open valley between the two passes and beside a rivulet lies a unique cultural sight – the town of Nianbadu.

#### Nianbadu

Nianbadu was ranked as the 28th village of the 44 villages in the precinct of Jiangshan, hence the name "Nianba" which is an ancient Chinese word meaning "28th." With its strategic location, the ancient town with a history of more than 900 years has been highly valued as the "key to Southeast China."

Arriving at Nianbadu means entering history. Under the jurisdiction of the city of Jiangshan, Zhejiang Province, the history of the ancient town can be dated back to the year 878, when general Huang Chao established Nianbadu as a key courier station when he opened up the way through the mountains to Fujian Province. From that time, the offspring of the garrison soldiers and merchants from all over the country developed it into a prosperous town.

Nianbadu has had a checkered history. From ancient wars to the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom uprising, the Red Army's trek in 1930s, and bombing by the Japanese in the 1940s, even the lofty mountains could not keep the little town isolated from the outside. Neither did the geographical barriers stop the southward migration by the northern nomads. Today, people of 141 different surnames call the ancient town home, 13 dialects are spoken by the town's 3,600 residents, and folkways and customs from all over China are practiced, amazing and enchanting visitors from far and near.

Not far from the bustling downtown, geese swim in the winding river, buffaloes toil in rice paddies, and the misty mornings ring with the laughter of women washing clothes by the stream. In the street, you can see the old women in indigo-blue gowns serenely sitting outside their doors sewing, while men shouldering ploughs walk to the fields and young women holding babies chat with one other. The residents here still seem to enjoy a harmonious and leisurely life.

The century-old shops and walled-in grayish-green residences stand orderly along both sides of the taw-paved Fengxi Street in the south of the town, which is the main trading area. The residences in

Xunli Street in the north of the town are particularly eye catching. They are built in the architectural styles of Zhe (Zhejiang), Min (Fujian), Gan (Jiangxi) and Hui (Anhui), and are typical manifestations of the architecture of the Ming and Qing dynasties. The lintels inscribed with Chinese characters, the fine-grained beams, the intricate windows with a profusion of carved decorations all remain largely intact.

Many places vie for attention in the ancient town of Nianbadu, such as Shui'an Bridge, a stone arch bridge with its mist-enveloped corridor, two Wenchang pavilions, the grandiosity and exquisiteness of which are incomparable in the town, and the courtyards of the rich families of Jiang and Yang, which are preserved intact, bearing witness to the rise and fall in fortunes of the town.

#### Fugai Mountain

Besides the ancient path, imposing passes, elegant bridge, running brooks, simple farmhouses and zigzag lanes, the majestic scenery of towering Fugai Mountain, just 3.5 kilometers south of the town, is breathtakingly impressive.

Fugai Mountain, with its jagged cliffs, grotesque and gigantic rocks as well as captivating landscape beckons to countless adventurous tourists. The granite landform of the mountain is the result of distortion within the earth's crust. Countless centuries of movement have shaped the mountain into a grotesque attraction.

Known as "little Huangshan Mountain," Fugai Mountain covers an area of 10 square kilometers. From a distance, it looks like a dragon with its tail pointing northwest and its head to the southeast, lying across Zhejiang, Fujian, and Jiangxi provinces. Xu Xike (1587-1641), famous geographer and traveler of the Ming Dynasty, visited the mountain three times, travelling through all the scenic spots and views, such as the Lotus Cave, Bat Cave, Gauze-hat Stone, and Chessboard Stone. He even left a record of his impressions in an article titled Records of Visiting Fugai Mountain, in which he described the mountain as a place of great attraction.

#### Former residence of Dai Li

Not far from Nianbadu, in the small village of Bao'an at the foot of Xianxia Peak lies the former residence of Dai

Li, the chief commander of the secret agents of the Guomindang Government's military commission in the first half of the 20th century.

Outwardly, the two-storey residence looks no different to the surrounding ordinary farmhouses, with whitewashed walls, light blue tiles, red-painted pillars and cement floors. Once you enter, however, you will immediately sense its mystery. The two-storey residence is actually three storeyed inside. The first floor has a high ceilinged, spacious living room, while on the second floor are seven rooms arranged like a labyrinth, each with two or more doors and three windows. In such a maze, one can easily escape from an attacker, no matter which corner of a room he appears from.

Even more fascinating is the secret escape tunnel. With the help of a guide, you may find a closet-shaped secret door between the study and the reception room on the second floor. The closet features a dark room where Dai's bodyguard hid and a narrow revolving stairway, just wide enough for one person to sidle through to the tunnel.

#### Around Nianbadu

The Jiangshan area is often described as a wonderland with "the most majestic and elegant sites in Southeast China." Besides Nianbadu, the Jianglang Mountain Scenic Area, picturesque and graceful, is renowned for its miraculous peaks, dream-like clouds, peculiar "one-line sky" as well as many cultural relics. Majestic yet elegant, fascinating yet precipitous, Jianglang Mountain has been mesmerizing tourists with its mystery and beauty for centuries.

#### Getting there:

Although situated deep in the mountains, Nianbadu is convenient to reach. National Highway 205 runs through the town, and it is just a four-hour drive from Hangzhou, and six hours from Shanghai.

Trains connect Jiangshan with Shanghai, Hangzhou and Wenzhou, and Nos. 1, 2 and 3 buses commute frequently between Jiangshan Railway Station and the city center.

#### Accommodation:

There are many inexpensive hotels around Nanmen Square, with rooms for around 50 yuan. The Fuyuan, Jiangshan and Ji-aotang hotels provide somewhat better services for 128 to 180 yuan a room.